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60 Perfect plants
for spring



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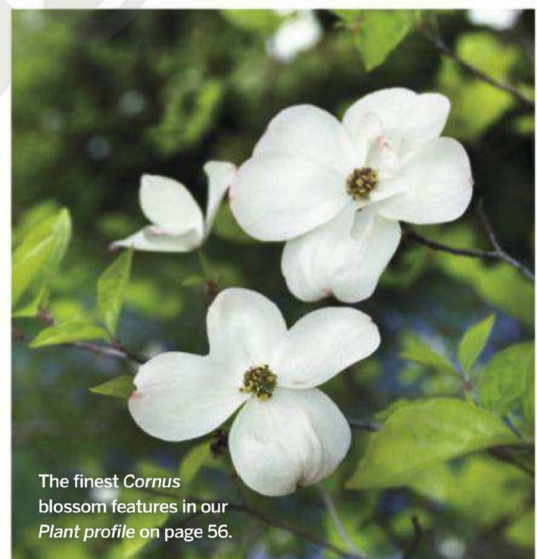
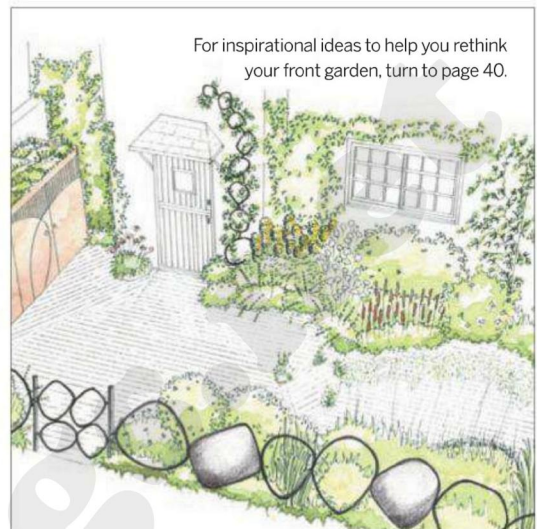
editor's letter



How often do you come across a really beautiful front garden? Not very often, is my guess. Even really keen gardeners frequently overlook the front area of their garden. I can't help thinking that perhaps a bit of inspiration is called for, so for this issue I asked designer Annie

Guilfoyle to devise three completely different looks for a front garden measuring 10m x 5m. I'm delighted with the results, which are full of original planting and design ideas as well as useful tips and insights (see page 40). A year or so ago, I visited a garden fair in France where the *Cornus* was blossoming its heart out and I became utterly smitten. I asked Tony Kirkham, head of Arboretum at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, to share his expert advice about his favourite cultivars and how best to grow them (see page 56). This issue, we also visit four remarkable private English gardens: from a town garden in London, planted so that you lose yourself in nature and completely forget the city (page 64), to an Arts and Crafts masterpiece, Vann, in Surrey, with a very special water garden, which the owners discovered was laid out and planted by influential garden designer Gertrude Jekyll in 1911 (page 32). I hope that you enjoy the issue,

Juliet



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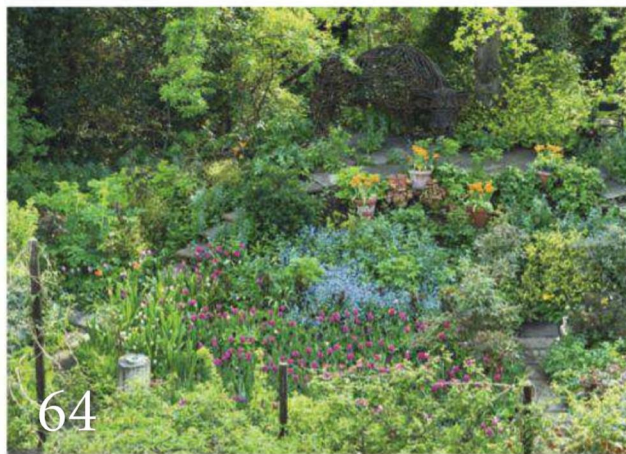
DAN PEARSON
Garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

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Walled front garden
by Lynn Keddie /GAP.
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guide to front gardens

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• Explore the gardens of Scotland on our reader holiday – see page 11

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July-Dec 2011
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contributors



LEIGH CLAPP

Australian-born and now based in Sussex, Leigh has been a garden photographer for 20 years. Her work appears regularly in newspapers, books and magazines, including *Country Life*. Her photographs of a Kent garden full of bright geums appear on page 48.

"I loved how these dainty geums could bring such a colour burst to the garden."



ANNIE GATTI

A former gardens editor of *The Times*, Surrey-based feature writer Annie is co-editor of *The Good Gardens Guide* and winner of the Garden Media Guild's 2011 Environmental Award. She profiles the writer and founder of the Chelsea Fringe, Tim Richardson, on page 54.

"Tim is full of surprises, from his comedy writing to his determination to become a published poet."



MARCUS HARPUR

After a spell in book publishing, Marcus became a garden photographer in 1992, forming Harpur Garden Images with his father and fellow photographer Jerry. He visits two gardens this issue – a small one in London (page 64) and a large one in his home county, Essex (page 68).

"In these two gardens the enthusiasm of the owners is infectious, and an inspiration."

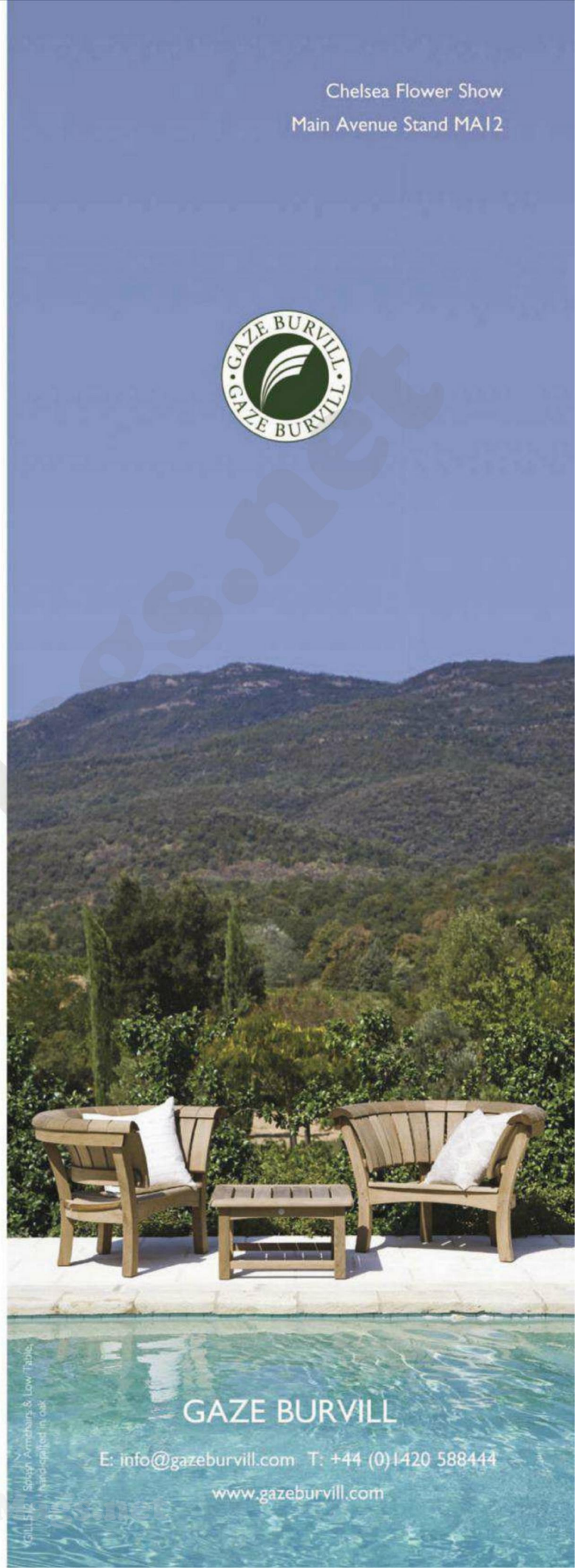


LIA LEENDERTZ

Allotmenteer Lia contributes to newspapers (*The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*) as well as blogging (at <http://lialeendertz.wordpress.com>) and writing books (of which the latest is *Twilight Garden*). Her guide to this month's garden tasks, *Gardener's notes*, is on page 23.

"I love turning allotment gluts into desirable treats. It's hard to tire of ruby chard falafels."

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letters

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star letter

Reader recommends

I enjoyed Roy Lancaster's article on the genus *Daphne* (issue 182, page 58). Of all the plants in my cold, Midlands garden, *Daphne tangutica* is the one I most highly value and would recommend to other readers. This shrub is a neat evergreen mound and very hardy. Mine is more than 20 years old and flowers twice every year. Besides the fabulous, soapy scent, it entices bees and then goes on to develop shiny orange berries. When ripe, I remove the berry pulp and sow the small seeds. After the winter's cold the seeds have usually germinated by late summer. These young plants make excellent gifts for my friends and by keeping a few for myself, I can be sure to continue enjoying this wonderful all-rounder.
Lee Botterill, Kents Green, Worcester



Lee Botterill sings the praises of spring and summer-flowering *Daphne tangutica*.

Debate

A case of mistaken identity

Two readers respond to January's Talking Point, in which James Compton protested that nurseries often mistakenly supply customers with the wrong plants.

- As a nurseryman, I say one must always speak up when an error is suspected or has been made. I truly do not understand why Dr Compton chose not to complain that first year. He made a choice. In this instance Dr Compton has allowed the nursery to get away with this mis-selling.

Jim Fox, Medina, Washington, USA.

- As a grower of old roses I sympathise with James Compton's dilemma. I vote for a complete refund or accurate replacement. I have had the same thing happen to me, but what was worse was having plants shipped that carried the dreaded rose rosette disease. Just yesterday I had to pull out a huge 'New

Dawn' (growing up and through my pergola) and a 'Blanche Double de Coubert' that had contracted the disease.

Lisa V Dziuban, Bucks.

Reader responds

Birds need spring feed too

When many of our 'common' garden bird species are in decline it is disappointing to read in GARDENS ILLUSTRATED that 'bird feeding becomes less essential by the end of the month' (*Gardener's notes*, issue 183, page 26). Yes, you should change the foods you are putting out, but do not stop. Spring and summer feeding is an important supplement for adult birds when they are busy raising young. There are many excellent live foods on the market, along with dried versions, which are perfect protein-boosts for adult birds and young alike. Both the RSPB and BTO offer good advice on their websites (www.bto.org, www.rspb.org.uk).

Kirsty Lloyd, by email.

WRITE TO US & WIN

The star letter wins a pair of Tobisho secateurs, worth £62. These award-winning Japanese pruners are hand-forged out of high-quality steel. For details visit www.niwaki.com



TALKING POINT

The record sums paid for rare bulbs will benefit all gardeners, argues Stephen Anderton

A price worth paying?

A large commercial nursery recently bought a new snow-drop bulb for a staggering £725. Should we feel deprived? Priced out of the market? Certainly not. You might say it was big business seeking cheap publicity (cheap is an understatement) but actually you and I are the winners. It's far better for rare bulbs to be bought by a rich international nursery than fall into the hands of a private collector to be hoarded like a Titian, seen by almost no one, waiting for the price to rise further.

A big commercial enterprise has the propagation, distribution and advertising systems to sell an exciting new bulb throughout the world, quickly, and far more cheaply than if it had gone into the clubby world of private collectors and small-scale nurseries who need exclusivity and a high price rather than volume sales.

A bulb sold to you and me is a bulb appreciated, and there is no other point to garden flowers; and if a rich nursery paying megabucks lets it happen, that's fine. Would we let a collector hoard the first paperback, aspirin or car?

- What's your view? Write to us by post or email and join the debate.



Thompson & Morgan paid more than £700 for a rare *Galanthus woronowii* 'Elizabeth Harrison' bulb.

We reserve the right to edit correspondence. □

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Noël is a lecturer, planting designer and writer specialising in plants and gardens. His work appears regularly in *GARDENS ILLUSTRATED*.

This tour, centred around Edinburgh and St Andrews, explores a wide profile of gardens that together reflect Scotland's unique garden culture. The climate and long hours of summer sunlight allow gardeners to grow a wide range of plants from all over the globe, with many gardens just reaching their peak in late summer.

During your stay you'll visit Little Sparta, the garden of artist-philosopher Ian Hamilton Finlay; the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh; and Cambo, which combines British plantsmanship with the latest European-style planting design.

Contemporary art is represented in gardens such as Whitburgh House and Jupiter Artland, which has one of the finest outdoor collections in Britain.

Scotland's history of planthunting continues with the likes of Stella Rankin of Kevoek Plants, while older traditions of garden-making can be seen in Arts and Crafts garden The Murrell and the rock garden at St Andrews Botanic Garden.

A special feature of the tour is that we will stay in privately owned country houses, giving us a chance to explore gardens at dusk or first light. We'll also visit a number of gardens not normally open to the public, including exciting new gardens at Teasses House and Broadwoodside. Throughout the trip there's the opportunity to meet head gardeners, designers, botanists and other leading lights from a lively garden culture.

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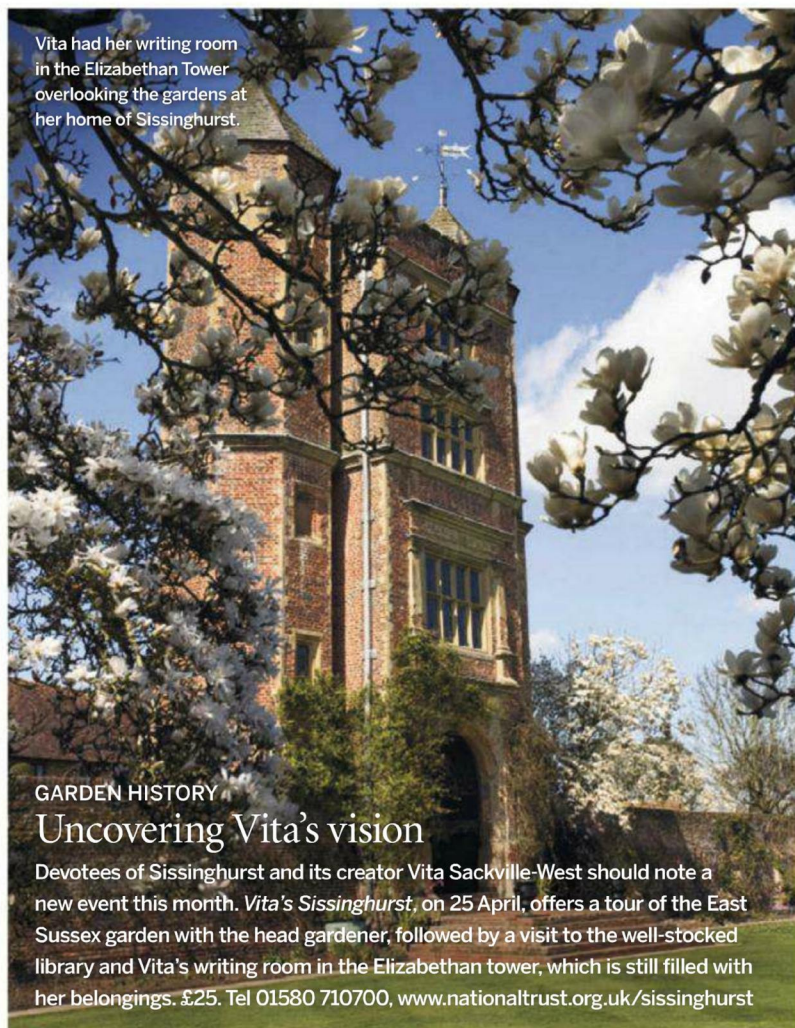


EXHIBITION

Monumental vision

British sculptor David Nash is to display a selection of works in an exhibition at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Nash has been creating sculptures for more than 40 years, primarily out of wood and often monumental in size. Using an axe and chainsaw to hone his shapes, he sometimes partially burns the sculptures to produce a brooding matt black charred surface. The exhibition opens fully in June but from 14 April visitors may find Nash at work within the botanic gardens, where he will be creating new sculptures from trees that have come to the end of their natural life at Kew. The exhibition takes place from 9 June until 14 April 2013. www.kew.org





Vita had her writing room in the Elizabethan Tower overlooking the gardens at her home of Sissinghurst.

GARDEN HISTORY

Uncovering Vita's vision

Devotees of Sissinghurst and its creator Vita Sackville-West should note a new event this month. *Vita's Sissinghurst*, on 25 April, offers a tour of the East Sussex garden with the head gardener, followed by a visit to the well-stocked library and Vita's writing room in the Elizabethan tower, which is still filled with her belongings. £25. Tel 01580 710700, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst



Why not choose something other than an egg this Easter? Bettys of Harrogate has a spring-inspired selection of chocolate animals including a flock of five miniature hens – two in white chocolate, one in milk chocolate and two in white chocolate flavoured with orange (£6.35); five caramel-filled rabbits in white and milk chocolate (£5.95); a trio of saddleback pigs (£12) and even a chocolate badger (£20). Tel 01423 814008, www.bettys.co.uk



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ANTIQUES

Treasures on sale

West Green House in Hampshire is to host a new garden antiques and collectibles market, *Les Tresors du Jardins*. The event promises an eclectic mix of objects that will add an original touch to your garden. 28-29 April, West Green House Gardens, Thackham's Lane, near Hartley Wintney, Hook, Hampshire RG27 8JB. Tel 01252 845582, www.westgreenhouse.co.uk



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NOSEY PARKER

We ask inquisitive questions to gardening people

Tom Coward

The head gardener at country-house hotel Gravetye Manor is renovating the gardens of former owner and naturalistic gardening advocate William Robinson

How did you first become involved with gardening? Helping my mother grow vegetables.

What was your first gardening job? I was 14, and it was for an old man called Cornel Yewl, who lived in the village. He used to sit in a deckchair and chat as I worked. He was a really nice and interesting man and taught me a lot, but would hit me with his walking stick if I didn't get the roots out when I was weeding.

Who has inspired your career the most? My mother, who is a great gardener.

What's the best gardening tip you were ever given? Don't be afraid to try things.

Do you favour a particular 'style' of garden? I love wild gardens, wildflower meadows and mixed borders but am open-minded. Everything has its place. Even carpet bedding can look fun sometimes, just not in my garden.

Name a garden you find inspiring? Great Dixter, for its intensity, creativity and fun, and Ventnor Botanic Gardens on the Isle of Wight, for its intimacy, character and climate.

What are you most excited about in the work for Gravetye's restoration? We are in the process of restoring the original Victorian glasshouses, which are pretty mouth-watering. This includes re-building a 60ft peach house and a series of cold frames. They should look magnificent when finished, as well as being highly productive growing machines.

What is your favourite bit of history in the garden at Gravetye? The potting shed. It's not pretty but generations of gardeners have messed around in there for more than a century.

What gardening tool would you never be without? A simple **Dutch light cold frame**. I only got to learn how to really use a cold frame to its full potential when working for Fergus Garrett at Great Dixter. I think they are the most versatile tool you can have to grow things with.

If you weren't involved in horticulture, what would you be doing? Farming.

Who would you most like to have dinner with? Ernest Shackleton, Edmund Hillary, Geoff Hamilton, William Robinson, Gertrude Jekyll, Beth Chatto, Sir David Attenborough, Victoria Pendleton and **Dolly Parton**.

Not a lot of people know this about me... And if they did they wouldn't want to!

• Tom is joined by plantsman and gardener Noël Kingsbury for our Reader Day about William Robinson and his gardening legacy, on 23 April at Gravetye Manor in Sussex. Tickets cost £150 and include a three-course lunch from Gravetye's award-winning kitchen. To find out more go to www.gardensillustrated.com/shop



NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

Get gardening!

The Royal Horticultural Society wants to get us all growing during National Gardening Week on 14-22 April. On 16 April the RHS opens up its advisory service (usually only available to RHS members) to anyone with a gardening query. On

17 April be sure to take a picture of your garden – send it to the RHS to become part of an historical record of gardens today. Careers in gardening come into focus on 18 April with talks and workshops and on 19 April the attention is on gardening for the environment. There are activities at each of the RHS gardens, too. www.rhs.org.uk/gardening/national-gardening-week



Diary



- **Tinsmiths print exhibition** with works by Ed Kluz, Angie Lewin, Emily Sutton and Mark Heard. 30 March to 29 April. Tinsmiths, 8A High Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1DS. Tel 01530 632083, www.tinsmiths.co.uk
- **The Cornwall Garden Society Spring Flower Show** Celebrating its 100th anniversary. Garden and nursery displays as well as competitive classes. 31 March to 1 April. £6. Boconnoc Estate, Boconnoc, Lostwithiel, Cornwall PL22 0RG. 01209 714488, www.cornwallgardensociety.org.uk
- **Workshop: Garden Photography** A half-day session with garden photographer Andrew Lawson, including illustrated talk followed by a practical photography session in the garden. 19 April, 10am-1pm. £70. Great Dixter, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6PH. Tel 01797 252878, www.greatdixter.co.uk
- **RHS Show Cardiff** Floral displays, show gardens and the best in Welsh horticulture. 20-22 April, 10am-5.30pm (4.30pm on the Sunday), £10 (£8 in advance, or £7 for RHS members). Bute Park, Cardiff Castle, Cardiff. For tickets call 0844 338 7506 or go to www.rhs.org.uk/flowershows
- **Fritillary Sunday at Waterperry** Enjoy the drifts of fritillaries on this NGS open day. Check with the garden nearer the time to confirm if the fritillaries are in bloom. 22 April, 10am-5.30pm. £6.30. Waterperry Gardens, near Wheatley, Oxfordshire OX33 1JZ. Tel 01844 339254, www.waterperrygardens.co.uk □

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Aquilegia canadensis

I was drawn to this *Aquilegia* after we grew large quantities for a Chelsea show garden in 2008. The sight of 150 plants standing to attention in perfect flowering ranks was a powerful lesson in the impact of mass planting. Coral coloured flowers have a kinetic as well as visual appeal, taking on a gentle sashay with passing breezes. Particularly effective when threaded through the lime green fronds of the shuttlecock fern, *Matteuccia struthiopteris*.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 80cm x 35cm.

ORIGINS Eastern North America.

SOIL Most average, well-drained soils.

SEASON April-May.

April plants

Bright ideas for beds and borders as the new season brings life surging back to your garden

WORDS CHRIS MARCHANT PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Chris Marchant is co-owner of Orchard Dene Nurseries in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, a wholesale grower specialising in hardy herbaceous plants

Lathyrus vernus

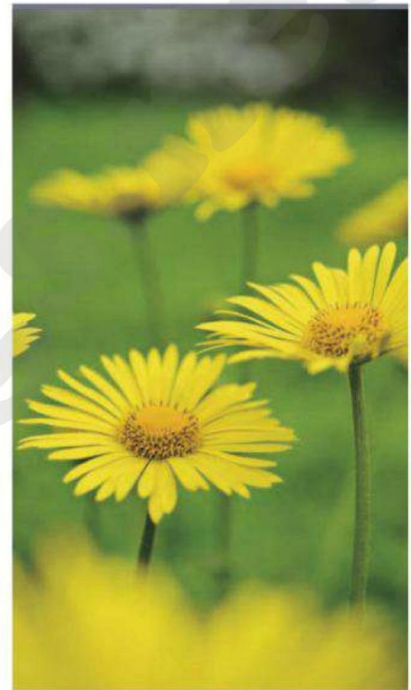
This is an underrated spring perennial, perhaps because of its alliance with the common vetch. From neat basal clumps emerge wiry stems bearing 6-10 hooded flowers, characteristic in shape of the pea family, but without tendrils, so not intent on scrambling through neighbouring plants. Flattish emerald pods follow; these ripen to a glorious red before snapping open and jettisoning seeds in all directions. Not content to stay meekly where originally placed, this plant contributes uncertainty to woodland layouts – just as nature intended.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 35cm x 30cm.

ORIGINS Woods, scrub and rocky ledges of most of Europe.

CONDITIONS Tolerates most loam soils; mulch with organic matter in spring.

SEASON Late March to April.



Doronicum x excelsum 'Harpur Crewe'

If you asked a young child to draw a flower, this is what you might get. Perfect, flat-faced daisies of bright golden yellow, turned to face the sun. Perhaps the naivety of its structure is the appeal. Unlike the more common *D. orientale*, this will flower for a generous four weeks, longer if the weather is not too hot. Generally flowers of the family *Compositae* prefer sunny, open spaces, but this one is most comfortable in light shade. It will slowly colonise spare ground if conditions suit, making a glorious display.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 70cm x 35cm.

ORIGINS A hybrid between *D. orientale* and *D. plantagineum*, from mountain glades and woodlands of Europe and Asia.

CONDITIONS Free-draining loamy soil.

SEASON April-May.



Sanguinaria canadensis
f. *multiplex* 'Plena'

An exquisite early woodland plant that forms slowly-spreading clumps, given the right soil conditions and the protection of dappled shade. Stems thrown up from rhizomes develop columns of neatly wrapped foliage encircling the flower buds. They remind me of a stand of choir boys in green cassocks and starched white collars. Each gently unfurls to reveal the splendour of the complex blooms. Being double, the flowers last longer than the single form, though eventually a stiff breeze will send a cascade of white petals falling to earth.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 20cm x 20cm.

ORIGINS Northern USA and Canada.

CONDITIONS Thrives in moist, humus-rich soil. Dislikes full sun and summer drought.

SEASON April.

Epimedium x *versicolor*
'Cupreum'

One of many exquisite and collectible forms of *Epimedium*, 'Cupreum' retains handsome foliage until late into the winter. New leaves emerge with a coppery blush highlighting leaf veins, before gradually receding to the outer margin to sit as a simple reddish outline. Emerging flowers open from deep pink buds to achieve the curious colour of Marie Rose sauce: sited beneath a bronze *Acer palmatum*, the partnership is perfect.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 25cm; spreads slowly by rhizomes to form ever-increasing clumps.

ORIGINS A hybrid of *E. grandiflorum* from Japan and *E. pinnatum* subsp. *colchicum* from northern Iran and Azerbaijan.

CONDITIONS Humus-rich, moisture-retentive soil.

SEASON Flowers April; foliage April-Nov.



Lamium orvala

It is the scale of this plant that makes me smile. We are all familiar with the humble dead nettle of English ditches and verges, but this giant form has aspirations of grandeur. To further its case, the flowers are not white but an elegant coppery pink with intricate burgundy veining. If it were an orchid, we would be marking its card high for presentation. The classic square-section lamium stem ensures no staking is required. Sought out by bees from miles around for its source of early pollen.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 60cm x 60cm.

ORIGINS Native to scrubs and maquis in central southern Europe.

CONDITIONS Most soils; partial to full shade.

SEASON April-May.

Places to visit

Chris Marchant names some of her favourite gardens and other places to see plants at their best

A trip to Nottingham at this time should include a visit to the medieval manor house of **Holme Pierrepont Hall**, where on Tulip Sunday (15 April, 2pm to 5pm) you can venture to outlying fields and take in the splendour of *Tulipa sylvestris* naturalised in great multitudes. Also open this month on 22 and 29 April, Holme Pierrepont,



Holme Pierrepont Hall

Nottinghamshire NG12 2LD. Tel 0115 933 2371, www.holmepierreponthall.com

The jewel-like precision of auricula primulas has led to their being collected and displayed in formal 'theatre' stagings for hundreds of years. Gardeners in the upper half of the country might care to visit the walled gardens in **Temple**

Melica altissima 'Alba'

Although relatively simple and seemingly unglamorous in its own right, this plant has the capacity to bring alive a range of informal border compositions. There are tactile and kinetic elements to its charm. Flowers like grains of white rice are suspended on slender, wiry stems and tremble in the slightest breeze. I have threaded these plants through countless other woodland flowerers to impart transparency and texture.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 60cm x 30cm.

ORIGINS Found in alkaline woodlands across Europe to Russia.

CONDITIONS Prefers well-drained alkaline to neutral soil in shady aspect. Drought tolerant but resents excessive winter wet.

SEASON April-June.



Erysimum cheiri 'Blood Red'

This deliciously scented wallflower needs little qualification to justify inclusion. Strictly speaking a short-lived sub shrub, in the UK gardeners tend to grow them as hardy biennials, bedding out in late autumn in readiness for the following spring. The fragrance is strongest after an April shower, when still air is gently warmed by sun. Velvet-textured, dark red flowers make an exciting contrast with tulips. We use 'Blood Red' in formal planters on the terrace where they scramble through orange *Tulipa* 'Irene' or the redder *T.* 'Jan Reus'.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 50cm x 30cm.

ORIGINS The species grows across temperate zones of Europe.

CONDITIONS Copes with a wide range of soils but prefers well-drained loam.

SEASON Flowers March-April.

Salix hastata 'Wehrhahnii'

Some plants bring a welcome tactile appeal to the garden border, and this is one. A slow-growing willow with even, spreading habit, that achieves only modest proportions even when fully grown and is therefore suitable for gardens great and small. In spring, stout, dark twigs are generously covered with silken, silvery male buds. Each one expands into an explosion of golden catkins, supported by fresh green foliage. At its flowering peak it is hard to resist a smoothing touch as you pass.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 1m x 1m.

ORIGINS Northern Europe.

CONDITIONS Moisture-retentive soil in sun or light shade.

SEASON Spectacular catkins in April, leaf cover thereafter.



Newsam Estate east of Leeds. Here, amid 1,500 acres of landscaped parkland, there are six National Collections, including one of alpine primula auriculas. Free entry to the estate daily during daylight hours. The Walled Garden, Temple Newsam Estate, Leeds LS15 0AD. Contact Mark Darwell, National Collections



LYNDA ROBINSON

co-ordinator, Leeds City Council. Tel 0113 2605173, email mark.darwell@leeds.gov.uk.

On selected Sundays in April and May, **The Old Rectory, Farnborough**, once the home to the late Poet Laureate John Betjeman and now owned by Caroline and Michael Todhunter, opens under the National Gardens Scheme. The imaginative

and accomplished planting combinations grow in formal and informal areas, with woodland walks especially good at this time – the multitude of *Allium ursinum* cascading in a white froth is a sight to behold. Borders contain many rare and interesting plants. Farnborough, Wantage, Berks OX12 8NX. www.ngs.org.uk. □



Old Rectory, Farnborough



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Spring to it

Sow, pot up and divide your plants now and you will have a garden filled with flowers, fruit and veg this summer

WORDS LIA LEENDERTZ ILLUSTRATION GEORGINA LUCK

THREE GREAT...

Flowers for cutting

Early April is the time to sow half-hardy annuals indoors. They can be planted out around six weeks later, when all chance of frost should be past (but do keep an eye on your forecast). These three make wonderfully productive and long-lasting cut flowers.

Zinnia Benary's Giant Mixed (from left below)

Bold flowers in Mexican-bright shades of rose-red, orange, salmon and purple are borne on tall, sturdy stems all through late summer. From www.chilternseeds.co.uk

Nicotiana x sanderae 'Perfume Deep Purple'

An elegant night-scented tobacco plant. From www.sarahraven.com

Cosmos bipinnatus 'Sonata White'

Purest white, big daisy flowers, borne on delicate ferny foliage. From www.thompson-morgan.com

THINGS TO DO

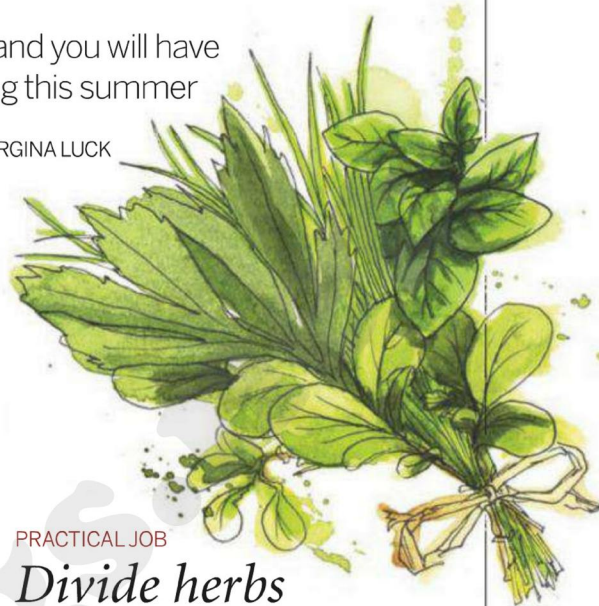
If you haven't got much time, just do these essential tasks...

Plant out early and second early potatoes at the start of the month, maincrops towards the end

Direct-sow carrots, beetroot, spinach, lettuce and other salad leaves

Early in the month, pot up dahlia tubers in large containers and keep them moist, somewhere light and frost-free.

Newly planted fruit trees will weaken if they fruit in their first year. Remove all blossom and nascent fruits now



PRACTICAL JOB

Divide herbs

Herbs are at their best used in big, generous handfuls, and now is the time to propagate many of the perennials so that you can use them with abandon. Dig up existing plants of mint, lovage, chives and marjoram, divide them and replant. At this time of year growing conditions allow them to recover quickly, leaving you wallowing in aromatic leafage all summer. ▶



READ THIS

Otter farm blog

► Otter Farm blog is a little bit of gardening and cooking, mixed in with a whole lot of observations on music, memories, random sports personalities and whatever else flits through the mind of its writer, Mark Diacono. It tells the story of Otter Farm, Mark's Devon smallholding, on which he has planted all manner of unusual edibles, and of Mark's gardening, harvesting and cooking. A worthy winner of the latest Garden Media Guild's Blog of the Year award (even though it stole the crown from my own blog). Essential reading: funny, unpredictable and occasionally educational. www.otterfarmblog.co.uk



PRACTICAL JOB

Fend off those slugs

A row of soft, sappy seedlings is no match for a free-ranging slug. One can wipe out an entire future crop at a sitting, so this is the time to be uptight and overly protective. If you can't decide on belt or braces, go for both. My own approach is twofold and occasionally threefold: for general population reduction I water on Nemasys slug-eating nematodes (suppliers include www.greengardener.co.uk) and then protect lines of seedlings with organic slug pellets (Advanced Slug Killer, try www.organiccatalog.com). Big plants get a short spell in a slug-repellant copper ring (try www.slugrings.co.uk) to see them through the vulnerable period.



ONE TO MAKE

Crunchy ruby chard falafels

It is a lean, mean time on vegetable plots right now, but perennial stands of ruby chard are pretty dependable. This recipe from Silvena Rowe's *Purple Citrus & Sweet Perfume* (Hutchinson, 2010) uses them as the basis for a falafel – the deep-fried Middle-Eastern dish – to delicious effect.

INGREDIENTS – serves four

4 tbsp olive oil	3 tbsp cooked chickpeas (canned ones are fine)
1 red onion, finely chopped	3 tbsp lemon juice
2 tsp ground cumin	500ml vegetable oil for frying
¼ tsp ground allspice	ground turmeric for garnish
500g red Swiss chard, well washed and roughly chopped	FOR THE SAUCE
250ml milk	4 tbsp tahini
100g chickpea flour	2 tbsp lemon juice
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper	1 tsp ground sumac
	1 clove of garlic, crushed

Sauté the onion, cumin and allspice in one tablespoon of olive oil over a medium heat for a few minutes. Set aside in a bowl. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and blanch the chard in it for two minutes. Drain, cool and squeeze out any excess water. Bring milk to the boil, then reduce to a simmer. Slowly whisk in the chickpea flour until you have a smooth paste. Season, add the remaining three tablespoons of olive oil and cook over a low heat for eight minutes, stirring continually. The mixture will come away from the sides of the pan and become a ball as it is heated. Cool the ball of paste, then mix in the sautéed onions, chickpeas, lemon juice and blanched chard. Using your hands, mold the mixture into golfball-sized lumps and arrange on a baking sheet. Refrigerate for a couple of hours. In a large saucepan, heat 5cm of oil to 175°C. Carefully place the falafel into the oil and cook for three to four minutes, until golden brown. Remove with a slotted spoon and place on paper towels to drain. Sprinkle with the turmeric. Mix the ingredients for the sauce and serve with salad and pitta breads. □

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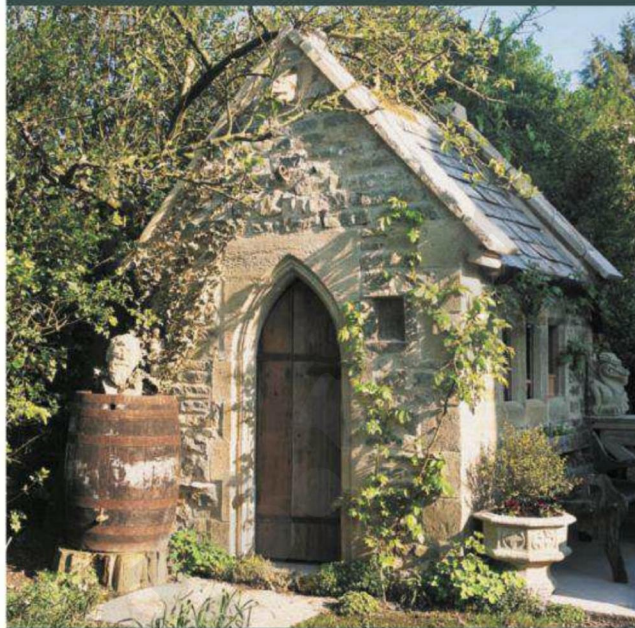


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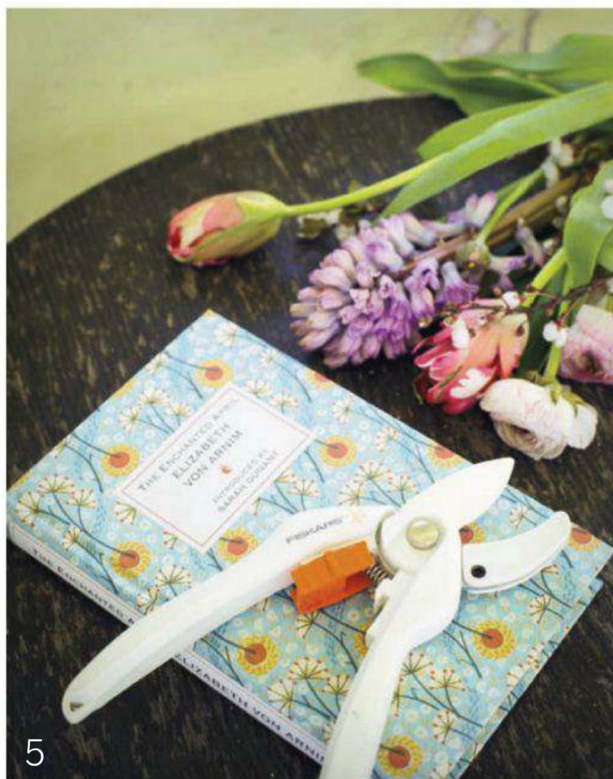
PHOTOGRAPHS SEAN MALYON STYLING AMY GRENHAM



1 This wooden pull-along **cart** makes light work of moving around your pots, plants and tools. £99 from **Camping with Soul**, 07847 933667, www.campingwithsoul.co.uk. It's pictured here painted with **Farrow & Ball Skylight exterior eggshell paint**, from £53.50 for 2.5 litres, 01202 876141, www.farrow-ball.com. **Sneeboer ladies' fork** and **transplanting spade** with steps, €99.60 and €97.45, + 31 (0)228 511 365, www.sneeboer.com



2 Foldable **bench**, £200 from Cox & Cox, 0844 858 0744, www.coxandcox.co.uk. Medium Camargue **cushion**, £35, glass **jug**, £34, **glasses**, £7 each, and **tray**, £38, all from RE, 01434 634567, www.re-foundobjects.com. **Books** from the VMC Designer Collection published by Virago, £12.99 each, available from book retailers. Wire **basket** with wooden handle, £24.95 for a set of three from Dibor, 0871 472 2322, www.dibor.co.uk 3 Brighten up house walls, garden buildings or pots with pastel shades. Various colours pictured: from Farrow & Ball, £49 for five litres of exterior masonry paint (see 1); Emery & Cie, €94 for 2.5 litres of water-based glossy paint, call +32 2 513 58 92 for stockists, www.emeryetcie.com; and Marston & Langer, £89.50 for five litres of exterior eggshell, 020 7881 5700, www.marston-and-langer.com



4 Tidy up your seed packets with this **wire mail box**, £15.50, from Cox & Cox (see 2). Orla Kiely-print **large plant pot**, £22.95, Wild & Wolf, 01225 789909, www.wildandwolf.com. Dibber and string, stylist's own. 5 Anvil **pruners** in 'Lily', £14.99 from Fiskars, 0115 927 7335, www.fiskars.com; **Enchanted April** by Elizabeth Von Arnim, with cover designed by printmaker Angie Lewin, from the VMC designer collection (see 2). □



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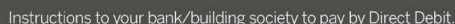
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Just as the house effortlessly blends Arts and Crafts additions with a building dating back in parts to the 16th century, so the planting blends the house with the garden. *Wisteria sinensis* clads the façade, while a rose-clad pergola leads out to the pools and woodland plantings at the garden's edges.

In brief

NAME Vann.

WHAT Grade 2-listed garden surrounding Grade 2*-listed 16th-century, timber-framed house with later extensions.

WHERE Near Godalming, Surrey.

SIZE Five acres.

SOIL Heavy clay, improved with compost over the years.

CONDITIONS Sheltered; some long dry spells in summer, when the river usually dries up.

SPECIAL FEATURES A rare Gertrude Jekyll-designed water garden.

Plus pergola and Yew Walk.

PLAN See page 38.

Country classic

How one determined couple rescued an outstanding Arts and Crafts garden – with a little help from Gertrude Jekyll, the local library and a Heffalump trap

WORDS JODIE JONES PHOTOGRAPHS MARIANNE MAJERUS

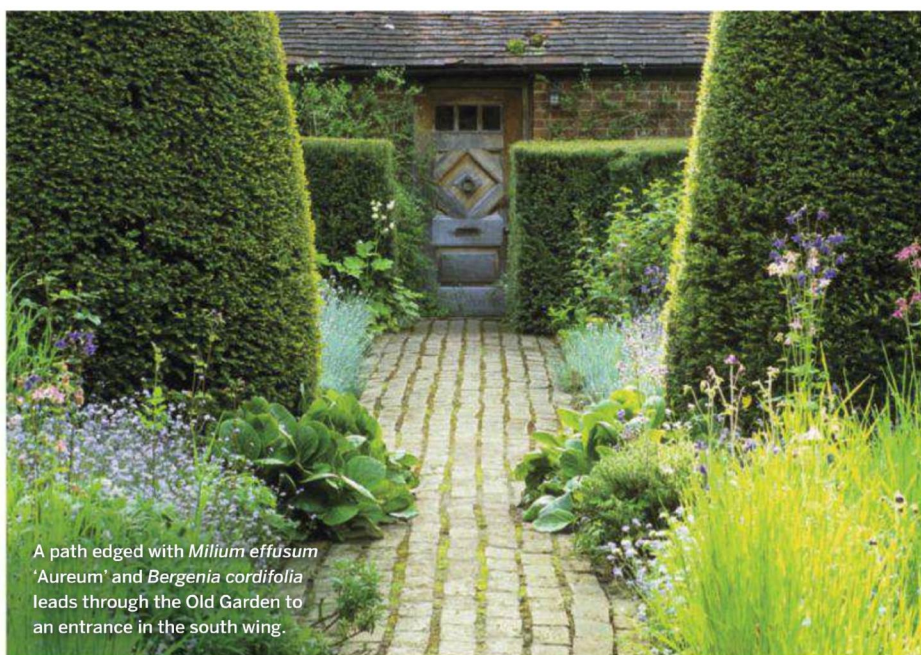
For a five-acre garden, Vann is a surprisingly intimate space. It extends around three sides of a long, low house that dates back in part to the 16th century, and which was enlarged from 1907 in the Arts and Crafts style by renowned ecclesiastical architect WD Caröe.

In true Arts and Crafts manner, the garden is divided and partitioned using clipped yew and neatly edged beds. The resulting garden rooms are relatively formal near the house, but a pergola of local Bargate stone leads to more relaxed spaces further out, including the naturalistic Water Garden.

The Water Garden was designed in 1911 by Gertrude Jekyll, whose own home at Munstead Wood was just four miles down the road. Although Jekyll wrote about informal water gardens, the current owners are not aware that she actually designed any others.

Battle commences

When Mary Caroe and her late husband Martin, grandson of WD Caröe, inherited the house in 1969, much of the land was given over to a market garden. Although Martin was working in the family architecture practice and Mary had four young children to manage, the couple happily set to work restoring the garden. “I enjoyed it but I didn’t really know what I was doing,” says Mary. “Before we married, Martin once visited my spinster flat in London and pointed out that the daffodils in my window box were actually onions.” Consequently, Mary was appointed chief weeder and together they began unravelling years of neglect. The Water Garden was a particular challenge, rife with bindweed and ground elder, and choked with sand washed from the hill behind the



A path edged with *Milium effusum* 'Aureum' and *Berberis cordifolia* leads through the Old Garden to an entrance in the south wing.



Red wallflowers and self-sown aquilegias, forget-me-nots and Welsh poppies (*Meconopsis cambrica*) thrive in a shady corner of the main lawn.



Overlooked by the 16th-century barn, a yew hedge fringed with *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii* separates the Old Garden from the South Lawn.



Twin borders full of pretty perennials such as cypress spurge (*Euphorbia cyparissias*) and Sicilian chamomile (*Anthemis punctata* subsp. *cupaniana*) flank the rill that bisects the Yew Walk.

“ In spring there are masses of crocuses and pulmonarias, Bowles’s golden grass, *erysimums*, *ballotas* and, after the last frost, we plant out lots of tender *salvias* ”



Hybrid bluebells make a bright pool of pink, white and blue under the lichened stem of a mature *Hydrangea paniculata* in a corner of the Old Garden.

▷ house (see *The Heffalump trap*, opposite, for the Caroes’ solution to this problem).

Although Jekyll was responsible for only one part of the garden, she would have approved of its overall design. Mary points out a similarity between the Yew Walk at Vann, which is bisected by a stone-edged rill (see picture on page 35), and elements of Jekyll’s work with Edwin Lutyens at Hestercombe in Somerset. “Mind you, the planting was very dull when we moved in – all roses and arabis,” says Mary. “Now, we think it is rather special. In spring there are masses of crocuses, pulmonarias, Bowles’s golden grass and *erysimums*, and after the last frost we plant out lots of tender *salvias*.”

Throughout the garden, Mary and Martin reshaped hedges, dug over borders with tonnes of compost to improve the heavy Wealden clay (still an annual ritual) and replanted. “Martin certainly had a marvellous eye for a combination,” says Mary, indicating a clump of golden *Spiraea* underplanted with black, grass-like leaves of *Ophiopogon planiscapus* ‘Nigrescens’.

In spring, many of the beds are picture-book pretty, crammed with forget-me-nots, cowslips, primroses and violets. Tulips are left in the ground to fend for themselves year after year, and there are roses everywhere, especially fine old cultivars such as *Rosa x centifolia* ‘Cristata’, *R.* ‘Charles de Mills’ and *R.* ‘William Lobb’.

A living legacy

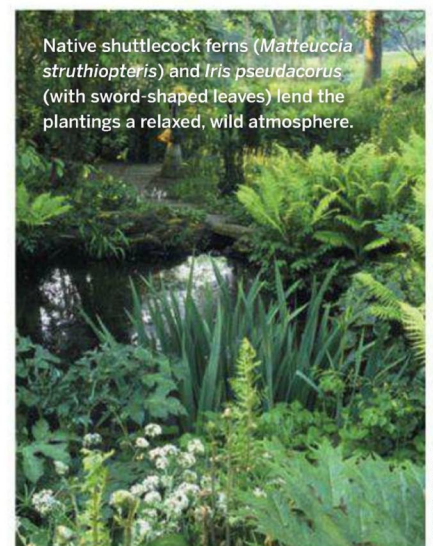
In the water garden, a surprising quantity of the 1,500 plants put in by Jekyll still survive. “The original 50 fritillaries she specified have spread into hundreds,” says Mary. And there are masses of her ferns: ▷



Laid out by Jekyll in 1911, the Water Garden comprises a series of pools fringed with damp-loving woodland plants such as snake’s head fritillaries (*Fritillaria meleagris*) and wood anemones (*Anemone nemorosa*).

The Jekyll connection

Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) is now revered as a great planting designer, celebrated for her influence on the Arts and Crafts movement. In the 1970s things were different. “Back then there was little interest in Jekyll,” Vann’s owner Mary Caroe points out. “I remember getting a call from a friend who worked in Godalming Library to say that she’d found a box full of notebooks in a cupboard, and that one had the name Vann on the cover. Of course the minute I saw all those little black notebooks I knew they were Jekyll’s, so I made copies of the pages about us and gave them back. These days you’d have to put on white gloves even to be allowed to open them.”



Native shuttlecock ferns (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) and *Iris pseudacorus* (with sword-shaped leaves) lend the plantings a relaxed, wild atmosphere.

The Heffalump trap

A quarter-acre pond is a placid spot on the edge of the orchard, but it also serves a practical purpose. Mary and Martin dug what they call "the Heffalump trap", a reference to the elephant in AA Milne's Winnie the Pooh stories, to stop sand choking the Water Garden. The resulting deep, wide pool slows the current down, encouraging any water-borne sand to drift to the bottom. "Even that has to be dug out twice a year by a man in a JCB," says Mary.

Garden plan

- 1 Herb Garden
- 2 Vegetable Garden
- 3 Borders
- 4 Fruit cage
- 5 New Centenary Garden
- 6 Vegetable Garden
- 7 Yew Walk with rill
- 8 Orchard
- 9 Pond
- 10 Jekyll Water Garden
- 11 Main lawn
- 12 Old Garden



Mary Caroe's favourite plants for spring

1 Euphorbias

We have many different euphorbias, including *E. characias* subsp. *wulfenii* (pictured), *E. dulcis* 'Chameleon' and the marsh spurge *E. palustris*. Those we do grow have, inevitably, cross-bred over the years, producing some interesting plants.

2 Viburnums

We grow lots of these, including *Viburnum plicatum* f. *plicatum* (pictured). *V. plicatum* f. *tomentosum* 'Rotundifolium' is a joy. *V. opulus* 'Roseum' is similar, except that the white flowers sometimes turn pink.

3 Forget-me-nots

So simple that some people overlook them, but I wouldn't be without forget-me-nots (*Myosotis sylvestris*).

4 Alliums

Invaluable. *A. hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation' (pictured) is a joy, but there are many others, including whites and yellows. Pale and dark forms look good together.

5 Aquilegias

We began with flamboyant, frilly pink-and-white *A. vulgaris* var. *stellata* 'Nora Barlow', but it crossed with ordinary purple forms to produce this fantastic flower.

6 Camassias

These were first introduced to Vann by Gertrude Jekyll. Now we have them in all shades from white through cream to blue. They are long-lasting and self-sow in moist parts of the garden.

7 Iris delavayi

A vigorous, clump-forming rhizomatous perennial up to 1.5m tall.

8 Anthriscus sylvestris 'Ravenswing'

Although I love the frothing umbels of the white cow parsley, I am particularly keen on this purple-leaved cultivar, a good garden-worthy plant that is less invasive than the wild version.

9 Tellima grandiflora

This is good value in spring, and flowers into early summer. It's excellent in flower arrangements, and the leaves turn an attractive pinkish colour in autumn.

▷ *Osmunda*, *Athyrium* and *Asplenium*, which look wonderful in spring as they unfold their shepherd's crooks. "She planted carpets of marsh marigolds, which are particularly lovely in April, together with snowflakes and a few special, but un-named, narcissi. They are beautiful and very delicate. I've never seen anything like them."

Other Jekyll selections have not stood the test of time. "Some things have completely disappeared, including a clump of acers and all the nymphaea, which we are trying to replace."

Mary is still the cautious guardian of Jekyll's clump of giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and battles the thuggish habits of *Gaultheria* and *Trachystemon*. "I'm sure she used the best plants she knew, but I do sometimes wonder whether now she looks down from the sky and says 'Whoops! I didn't know it would invade like that.' We have so many improved forms to choose from now. You've only got to look at how the *RHS Plant Finder* has grown over the years. I'm sure Jekyll would have used the marvellous new pulmonarias and astilbes in the water garden if she had had them."

The woman who once mistook an onion for a daffodil is utterly devoted to her garden, though never sentimental. "I won't be tied down by it. I'm a granny-gapper – I love to travel. I can always catch up with the garden when I get back."

For the last few years gardener Nick Shepherd has worked alongside her three days a week. "He is tremendously good at pruning things into an attractive shape."

And on those days that she does garden, only lack of light will force her indoors. "Although I have found that you can still rake leaves in the dark because they sort of shine." You feel she and Gertrude Jekyll would have got on rather well. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

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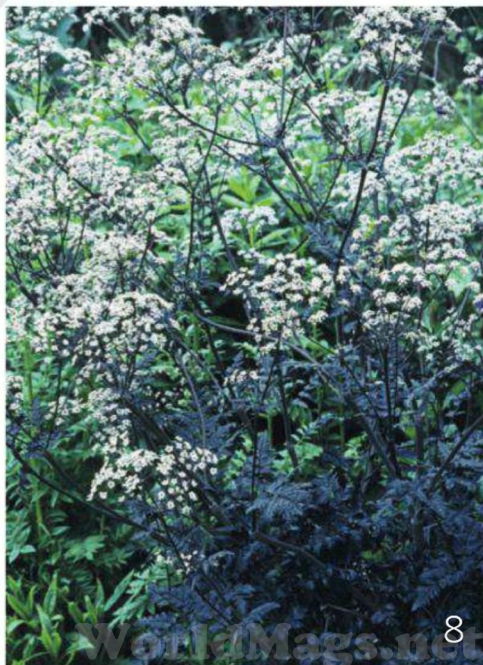
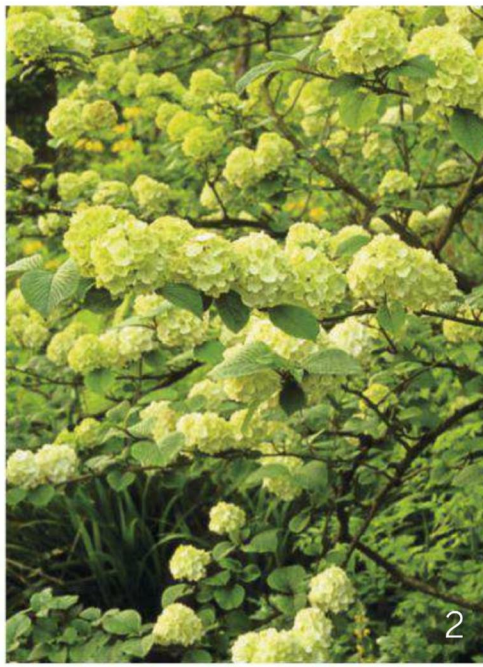
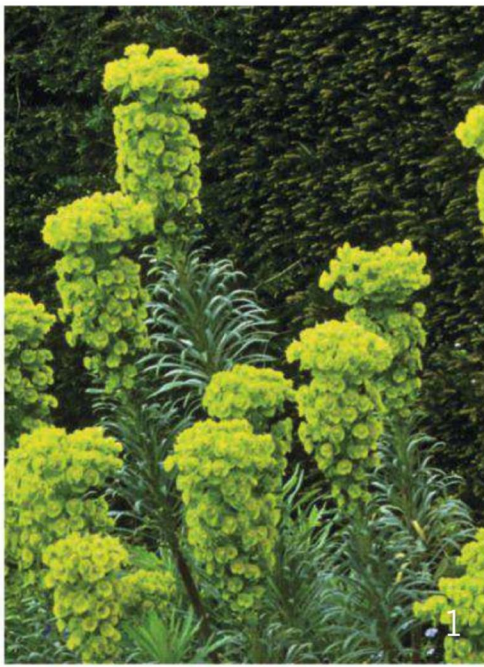
OPEN 10am-6pm, Wednesdays, April to July; and (under the National Gardens Scheme) 25-28 March; 9-15 April; 6-13 May; 10-17 June. Also by appointment.

TEL 01428 683413

WEBSITE www.vannngarden.co.uk

PLAN BY HANNAH MCVICAR

6 LYNN KEDDIE / GAP PHOTOS, 8 ANDREW LAWSON / GETTY, 9 FIONA LEE / GAP PHOTOS



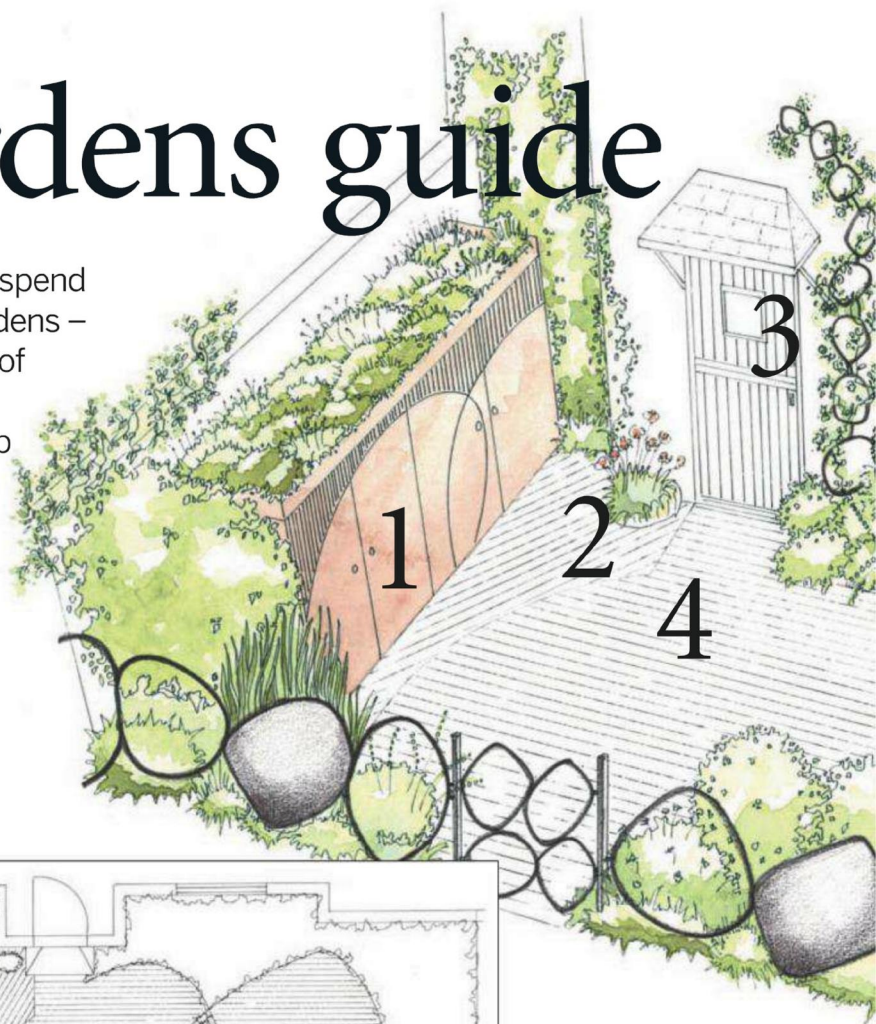
Front gardens guide



Annie Guilfoyle runs garden design consultancy Creative Landscapes (www.creative-landscapes.com) and is director of garden design for KLC School of Design.

Even keen gardeners often spend little time on their front gardens – yet we use them every day of the year. So here are three inspirational designs to help you make a welcoming green space out front

WORDS & ILLUSTRATIONS
ANNIE GUILFOYLE



Country garden

When designing gardens, inspiration can be drawn from everything around you. In this country garden two of my favourite influences combine, with dashes of the garden at Great Dixter in East Sussex meeting the sublime 1950s textile designs of Lucienne Day. Not for the faint-hearted, as the colours are bold and brassy with pink, bright orange and hot yellow colliding together. The use of

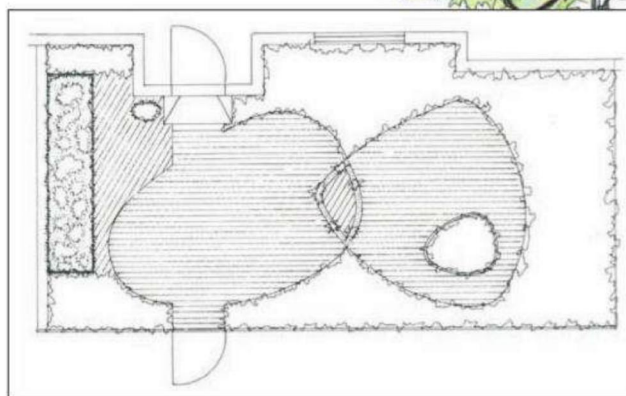


quirky railings and directional paving means it may not be everybody's cup of tea.

However, beyond the crazy colours I have selected some really outstanding plants that will command attention

and even possibly adoration. *Edgeworthia chrysantha* has lemon drops of flowers so richly scented in midwinter that it will uplift even the weariest soul. *Neillia thibetica* ensures the garden will be buzzing with bees and butterflies in early summer. Clematis are indispensable, perfect for providing vertical impact in confined spaces.

Most of the plants in this garden enjoy a moist but well-drained soil and with this in mind I have placed gravel strips between the junctions of the paving. This provides a perfect location for exciting seasonal treasures that require good drainage, such as *Tulipa acuminata*, *Rhodohypoxis deflexa* and *Crocus angustifolius*. These little gems will happily hold their own against the bolder plants, heralding the changes in season.



Annie's three alternative designs are intended for a space measuring approximately 10m by 5m.

Key plants for a country garden



Allium cristophii

Alliums are generally easy to grow. Heralding early summer, these large purple orbs look wonderful when punctuating the border. Magnificent seedheads follow.



Rhodohypoxis deflexa

I first saw this at Keith Wiley's extraordinary Wildside garden in Devon, where I was captivated by its jewel-like qualities. It won't tolerate extreme wet winter weather.

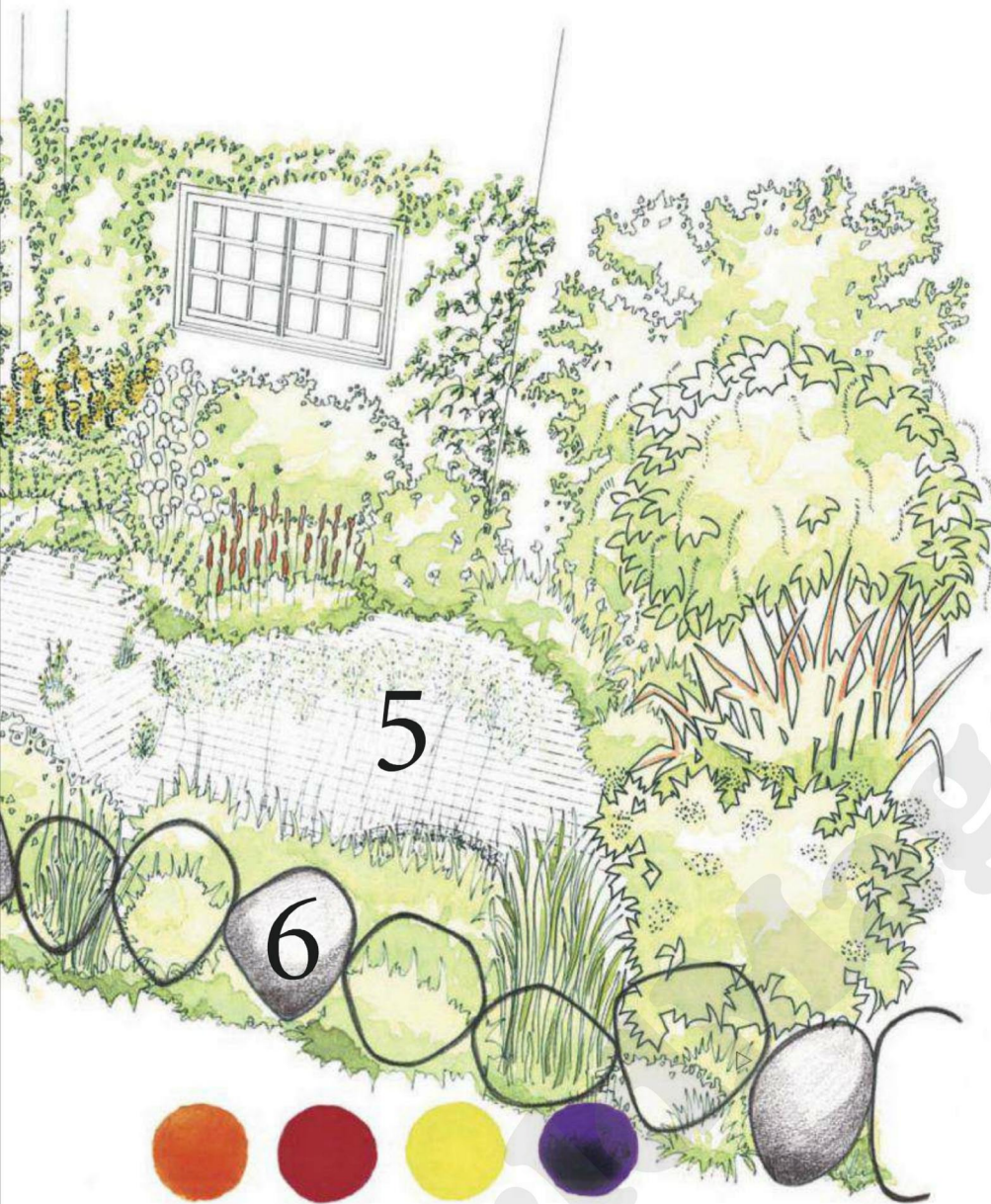


Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora 'Babylon'

Great plants are often maligned. The leaves emerge early and it flowers all summer in a mouth-watering mix of bright orange-red with a brownish centre.

XXXXXXXXXXXX

FROM RIGHT TO LEFT: HEATHER EDWARDS / GAP PHOTOS; OSCAR D'ARCY / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES; VISIONS / GAP PHOTOS; HOWARD RICE / GETTY IMAGES; JOHN GLOVER / GAP PHOTOS; VISIONS / GAP PHOTOS



1 Bin and bike storage

This should be easily accessible from the house and gate. A green roof softens the visual impact. Planted with sedums, it requires little maintenance.

2 Doorstep planter

Instead of using the doorstep planter to hide the door key, make more of it. It's the perfect place to have a moveable feast of seasonal bulbs or tender plants.

3 Plant support on the wall

Conventional trellis can look dreary. This metal wall sculpture adds individuality and provides a stylish support for a beautiful rose.

4 Ramped paving

New-build dwellings should comply with DDA regulations (Disability Discriminations Act), allowing for wheelchair access. Ensure that the ramp is non-slip by using textured stone.

5 Directional paving

Use diamond-sawn sandstone cut in long lengths rather than rectangles. Change the direction of the paving or vary the width to create a subtle effect without looking too fussy.

6 A statement fence

Forged iron railings inspired by 1950s textiles make a funky fence. It may not stop the dog escaping but it will stop passers-by in their tracks. ▶



Tulipa acuminata

The most exquisite of all the species tulips. An elegant flower with sharply pointed petals of red and yellow. You will understand why it's called the fire flame tulip.



Rosa 'Zéphérine Drouhin'

A stunning pink climbing rose which is very popular due to the lack of thorns. Richly scented, it will tolerate light shade but does a need good air circulation.



Crocus angustifolius

It's easy to think of crocuses as a bit old-fashioned, but they offer a splendid show of spring colour. This scented species is a rich gold, flushed with mahogany stripes.

Planting options

Bold and vibrant colours

- *Geranium psilostemon*
- *Rhodohypoxis deflexa*
- *Helianthemum* 'Henfield Brilliant'
- *Echinacea* 'Art's Pride'
- *Euphorbia myrsinites*
- *Clematis* 'Jackmanii'
- *Berberis thunbergii* 'Pow-wow'
- *Agastache* 'Tangerine Dreams'

Plants to make the neighbours stop and stare

- *Edgeworthia chrysantha*
- *Clematis* 'Vince Denny'
- *Rhaphiolepis indica*
- *Neillia thibetica*

Show-stopping bulbs

- *Tulipa acuminata*
- *Nectaroscordum siculum* subsp. *bulgaricum*
- *Tulipa* 'Cayenne'
- *Allium cristophii*

Great for green roofs

- *Sempervivum arachnoideum*
- *Sedum spurium*

Roses

- *Rosa* 'Zéphérine Drouhin'
- *Rosa* 'Madge'

Town garden

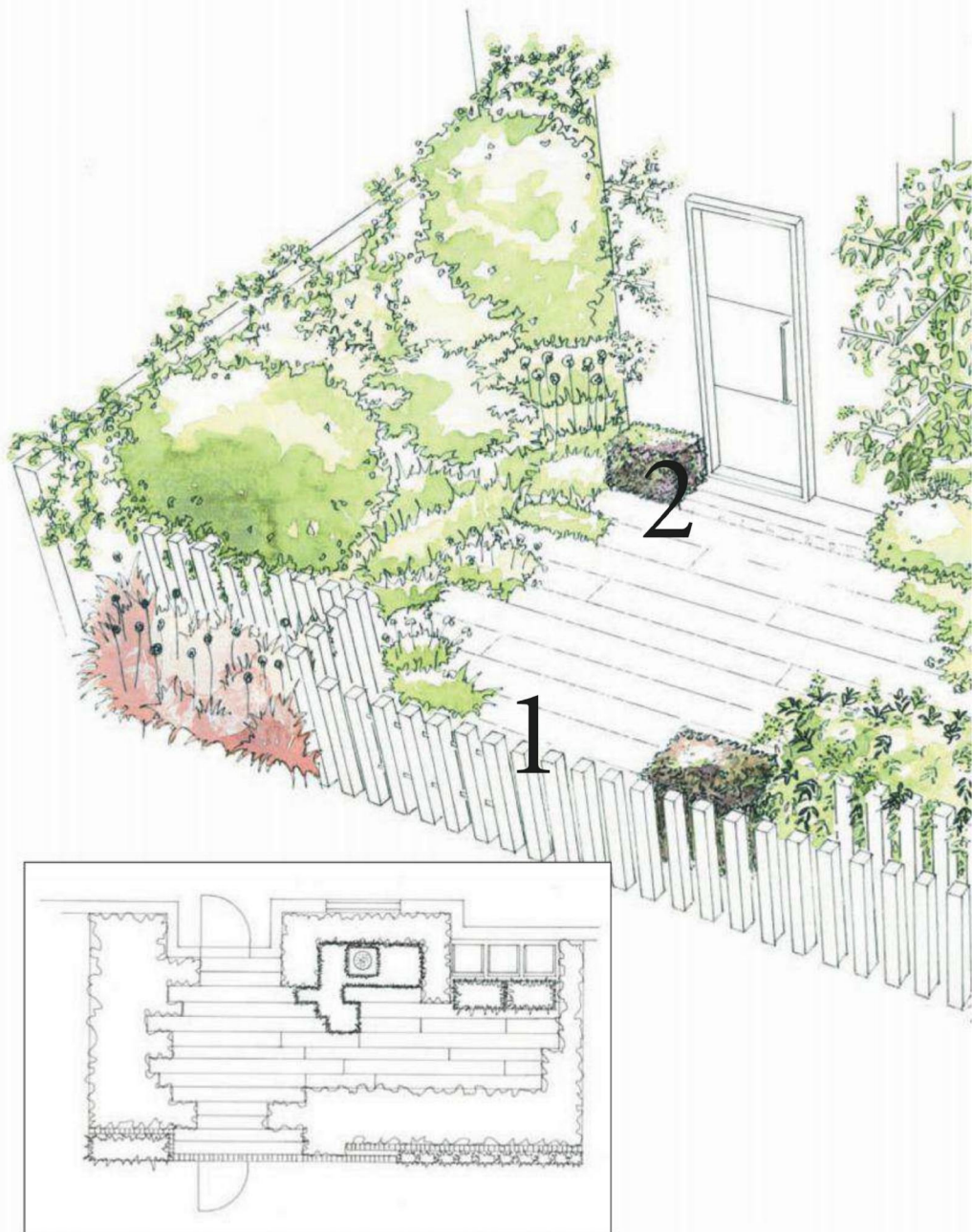
▷ Architect Carlo Scarpa's work is a subtle blend of minimalism and exquisite detailing. His collaboration on the Monument to the Partisan Women in Venice (pictured below) is one of his most powerful and intriguing pieces of work. Low tide reveals a woman's body clambering to safety over a series of



stone blocks. The asymmetry of Scarpa's composition has inspired the layout of this town garden. Staggered stone paving accentuates the plot's width, and plants are encouraged to reach into the space. Simple,

linear fencing echoes the paving pattern and allows glimpses into the garden. In this shady space the structural plants are evergreen, so it will look vibrant throughout the year. The colour palette is limited, using earthy tones that complement each other well. Scent is a major player, with *Daphne bholua* 'Alba', *Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis* and *Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Purpureus' all providing sweet perfume during winter and well into spring.

Practically any shrub can be used to form a hedge. For this garden I have chosen the best-behaved shrub in the world, *Nandina domestica*. It maintains an elegant shape without taking over the garden. An unusual hedge with textural foliage, it looks stunning – and no trimming required. The bins are screened behind two containers planted with bamboo (*Fargesia murielae*).



Key plants for a town garden



Akebia quinata

A gorgeous climber that needs plenty of space. Richly coloured, chocolate-scented flowers are often followed by intriguing fruits. Attractive, semi-evergreen foliage.



***Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Diabolo'**

One of my favourite deciduous shrubs with stunning rich, dark brown foliage and delicate pink flowers in early summer.



Athyrium niponicum* var. *pictum

Ferns are under-used in gardens. This is one of the prettiest, with painted leaves of silver-green and soft purple. Resist it if you dare!



Clematis armandii

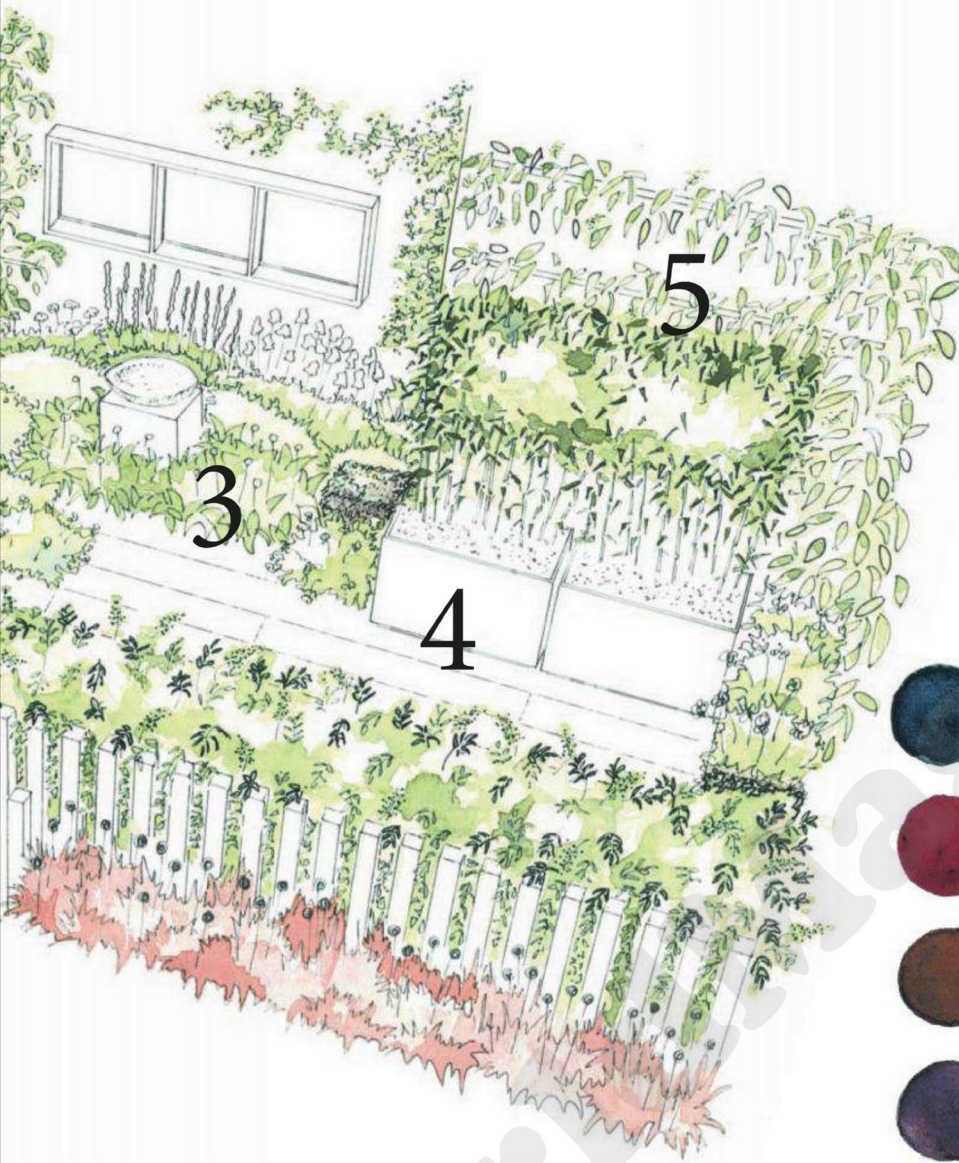
An evergreen that can be vigorous once established. With superbly textured leaves and vanilla-scented flowers in late winter, it will grow happily on a shady wall.



***Crocus* 'Prins Claus'**

A beautiful crocus with an alluring colour combination of white petals and a dark purple streak on the outer side. This regal plant will change your mind about crocuses forever.

FROM RIGHT TO LEFT: NEIL HOLMES / GAP PHOTOS; FRIEDRICH STRAUSS / GAP PHOTOS; MARIANNE WAJERS / NEIL YODARWID / ALAMY; MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS; VICTORIA FRIMSTON; CAROLE DRAKE / GAP PHOTOS; MARK WINWOOD / GAP PHOTOS



1 Asymmetrical wooden fence
Individual posts are set into concrete. Cut at different heights, and overlap or stagger some sections to accommodate low planting on the pavement side. The shadows cast add another dimension to the design.

2 Evergreen blocks
Purple or brown evergreen foliage is extremely hard to find. However, *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Tom Thumb' looks wonderful when clipped into a cube shape and provides a cunning change from box.

3 Water feature
The best way to attract birds into the garden is by providing water, be it a simple bowl or an artist-made vessel. Ensure it is clearly visible from inside the house to enjoy the view.

4 Planters on wheels
Hide the dreaded wheelie bins by using planters on wheels. These are easy to move when the bins have to be put out. Make them from wood or metal, or simply fit wheels to an existing planter.

5 Plant supports
Metal strips set off the wall allow space for air to circulate around the climbers. Paint in dark colours if you want them to disappear or choose a bright colour to make a statement. Varying the lengths will emphasise the asymmetrical design. ▶



***Daphne bholua* 'Alba'**
Queen of the daphnes. This is possibly the best shrub you will ever plant in your front garden – a compact evergreen that has a winter scent like no other plant.



Fargesia murielae
It is the finely textured leaves that make this clump-forming bamboo so attractive. For those who have a fear of using bamboos, this is a good one to start with.



Nandina domestica
This essential evergreen is possibly at the top of my top-ten shrubs list. Delicate foliage and in most years sprays of white flowers followed by berries.

Planting options

Evergreen structure with burgundy/brown foliage

- *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Atropurpureum'
- *Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Purpureus' (foliage flushed purple when young)
- *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Tom Thumb'

Sweetly scented

- *Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis*
- *Daphne bholua* 'Alba'
- *Clematis armandii*
- *Phlox paniculata* 'David'
- *Narcissus* 'Petrel'

Good for shade

- *Pileostegia viburnoides*
- *Epimedium* x *cantabrigiense*

Long season of interest

- *Astrantia major* 'Ruby Wedding'
- *Geranium Rozanne* (= 'Gerwat')
- *Nandina domestica*

Notable climbers

- *Akebia quinata*
- *Clematis* 'Frances Ravis'
- *Clematis viticella* 'Flore Pleno'
- *Clematis* 'Betty Corning'

Coastal garden

▷ Thomas Heatherwick's wave-shaped East Beach Café in Littlehampton is the inspiration for this coastal garden. Coastal gardens are generally less prone to severe frosts, but wind and salt-laden air can cause problems. Wind is probably one of the most destructive elements in the

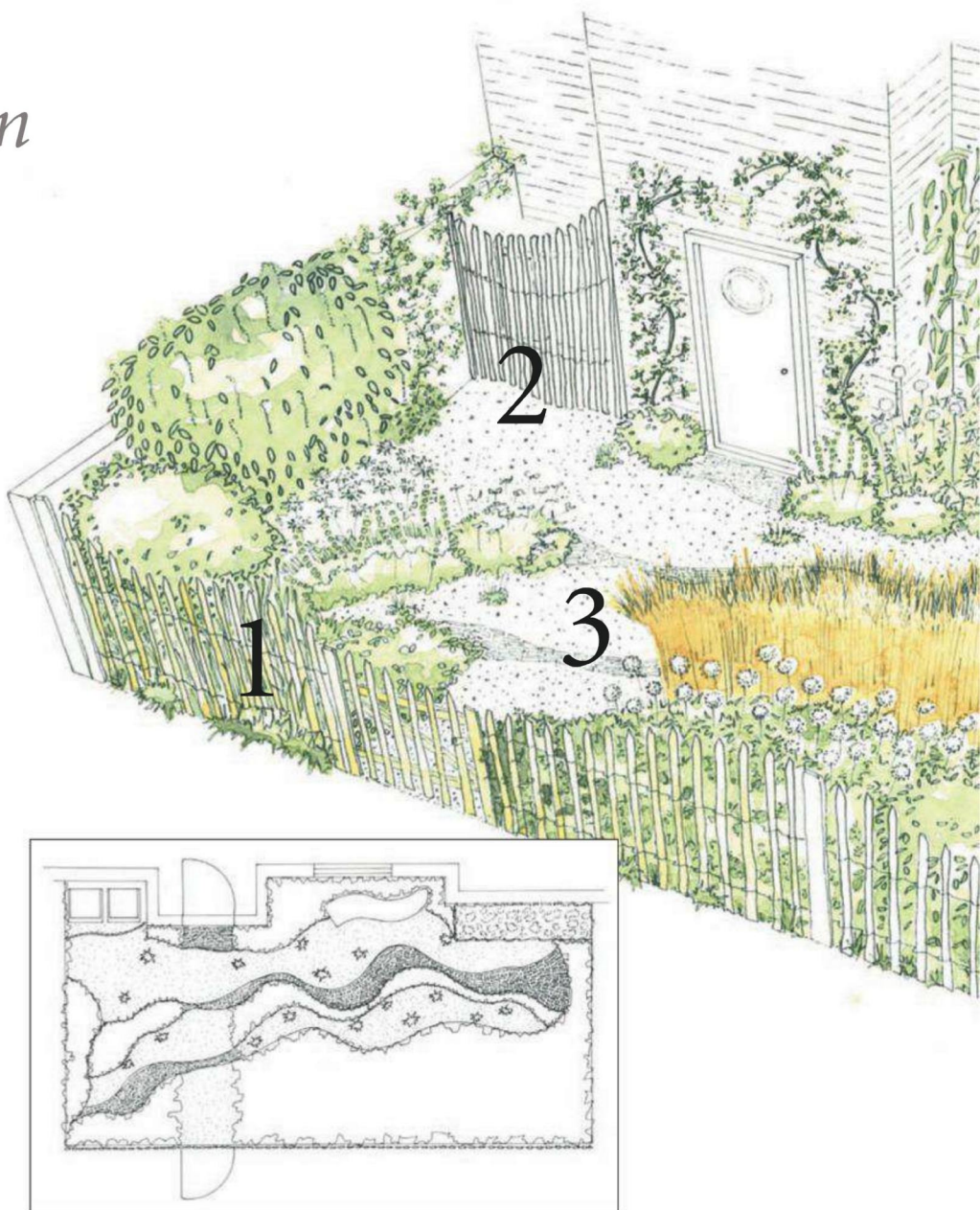


garden, rocking plants and destabilising roots. It lessens the plant's ability to obtain nutrients and water. When selecting plants, choose ones that originate from coastal or exposed areas and ensure they

are planted firmly to avoid wind-rock.

The fluid shapes of poured concrete combine with stones set on edge, forming a sinuous ground pattern that weaves through the drifts of plants. Swathes of loose gravel allow the vagrants such as *Acaena inermis* 'Purpurea' to self-seed. Undulating waves of *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' intermingle with *Echinops sphaerocephalus* 'Arctic Glow'. These statuesque perennials will sway in the breeze, continuing well into autumn and sometimes even early winter.

Shades of seascapes and sultry skies reflect in the planting palette with silvers, blues, purple-pinks and buttery yellows. These plants will relish the sunny site and free-draining soil but will happily tolerate the salt-laden air. *Armeria maritima* 'Rubrifolia' covers the wood store, forming hummocks of purple foliage dotted with pink flowers.



Key plants for a coastal garden



Agapanthus 'Gayle's Lilac'
Everyone likes *Agapanthus* but not everyone grows a lilac-coloured one. This beauty is a bit different, which makes it desirable. Half-hardy and heavy-flowering.



Armeria maritima 'Rubrifolia'
Sea thrift is one of our prettiest coastal plants. This one has bronze foliage dotted with pink flowers in spring and early summer. It may look delicate but it's a toughie.



Echinops sphaerocephalus 'Arctic Glow' A statuesque perennial with all the attributes of blue globe thistles, except that these are a stunning silvery-white. Bees and butterflies thrive on it.

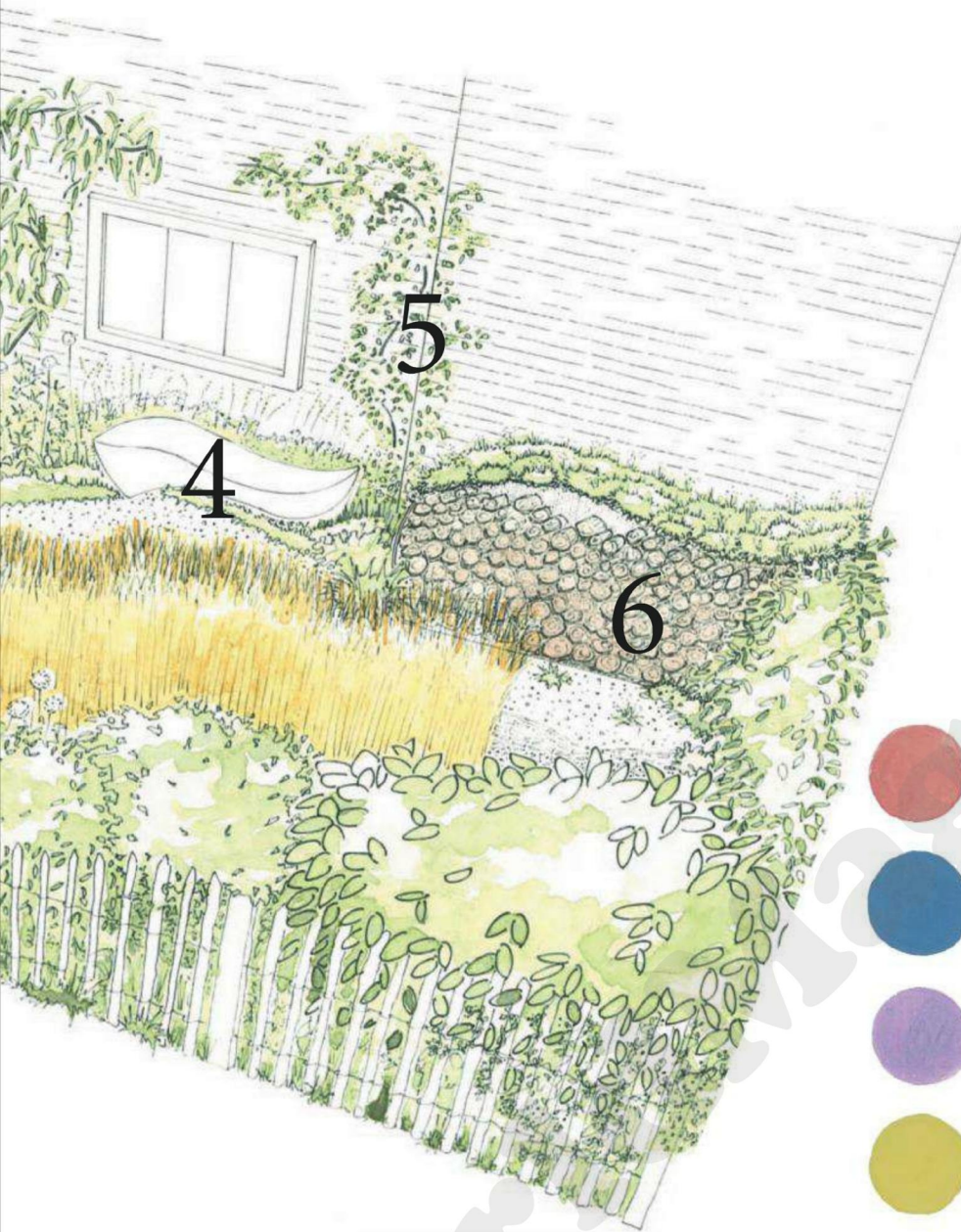


Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster'
A tall, upright grass with striking straw-yellow stems. It holds its shape even in the windiest places and maintains its form well into the winter.



Itea ilicifolia
A perfect evergreen wall shrub for a sheltered spot. It bears long, honey-scented flower racemes from midsummer, every other year in some gardens.

THOMAS HEATHERWICK CAFE / THEYE UBIQUITOUS / ALAMY.
PLANT PORTRAITS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GARDEN WORLD
IMAGES. FLOWERPHOTOS / ALAMY. GEOFF DU FEU / GAP PHOTOS. NICOLA BROWNE /
GAP PHOTOS. HOWARD RICE / GETTY IMAGES. MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS



1 Chestnut paling fence

Traditional and sustainable. Design it specifically for your garden; in this case undulating waves echo the coastal theme.

2 Screening the bins

If you have a recess that is easy to screen off, why not position the bins there. Make the screen out of chestnut paling so it links seamlessly with the front fence.

3 Concrete

Excellent for creating flowing shapes. Inset with stones laid on edge to form ribbons that ebb and flow across the garden. Pebbles or shells can be used for additional colour and texture.

4 Seat

For some reason putting a seat in the front garden is not the done thing, but why not? Make it from found objects such as driftwood and boulders or commission a designer to create something unique.

5 Plant supports

Replace the common or garden trellis. Commission a blacksmith to make something inspiring. It can be made to fit your walls perfectly and suit the plants that you intend to grow.

6 Wood store

Easy access to the house and a dry location are important. If your garden faces a prevailing wind, you may need a roll-down cover to keep the wood dry. □



Tulbaghia violacea

Scented star-like flowers held on elegant stems make this a desirable addition to the garden. Garlic-smelling leaves can help to repel pests such as aphids and slugs.

Planting options

Unusual shrubs

- *Olearia x mollis* Cockayne 'Zennorensis'
- *Itea ilicifolia*
- *x Rhamphobotrya* 'Coppertone'
- *Lonicera syringantha*
- *Myrtus communis* subsp. *tarentina*
- *Artemisia abrotanum*

Wind-tolerant perennials and grasses

- *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'
- *Libertia* 'Taupo Blaze'
- *Eryngium giganteum* 'Silver Ghost'
- *Armeria maritima* 'Rubrifolia'

- *Echinops sphaerocephalus* 'Arctic Glow'

Climbers

- *Sollya heterophylla*
- *Holboellia coriacea*

Ground cover

- *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum'
- *Acaena inermis* 'Purpurea'
- *Thymus* 'Porlock'

Bulbs

- *Allium unifolium*
- *Tulbaghia violacea*
- *Allium stipitatum* 'Mount Everest'
- *Tulipa* 'Apricot Beauty'

Law in the front garden

Planning permission is required:

- When paving an area larger than five square metres using non-permeable paving.
- If constructing a wall or fence more than 1m high, when adjacent to a public highway or footpath.
- With a listed house or if the garden is within the curtilage of a listed building.

Planning permission is not required:

- When using permeable paving or allowing water to run off into a lawn or border.

8 ideas for front gardens

Whether you want a smart, contemporary style or a relaxed, rustic look, here are some essential themes that will help you make the most of your space



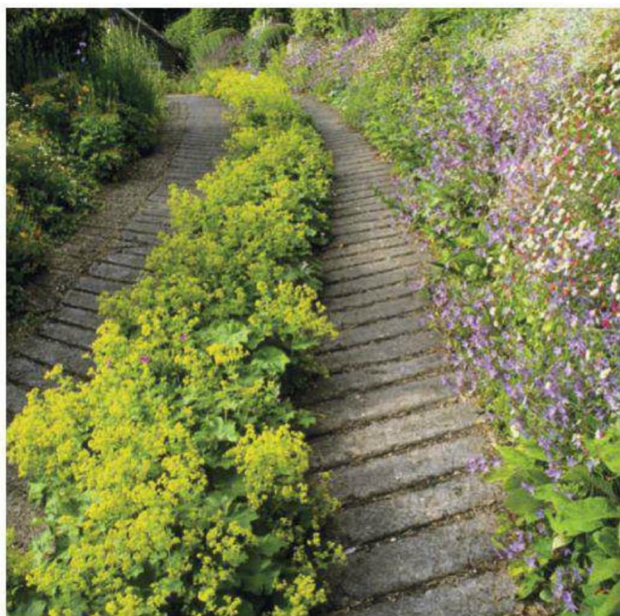
1 Vertical colour for small spaces

Cover walls and fences with climbers and wall shrubs such as this *Wisteria*. Carefully research the eventual size of the plants, to ensure that they will not outgrow the space or cause structural problems.



2 Good ground cover

Reduce the harsh appearance of paving with ground-hugging plants that fill cracks, giving your garden a relaxed and informal look. Mix plants or select just one, such as this *Acaena*, to unify the design.



3 Self-seeders allowed

What could be better than plants for free? Prolific self-seeders such as *Alchemilla mollis* can be useful for filling awkward places. For variety, experiment each year using different annuals.



4 Sitting pretty

If your garden has a sunny aspect or a glorious view, why not position a seat where you can sit and relax? Wherever you place the seat, consider surrounding it with an abundance of scented plants.



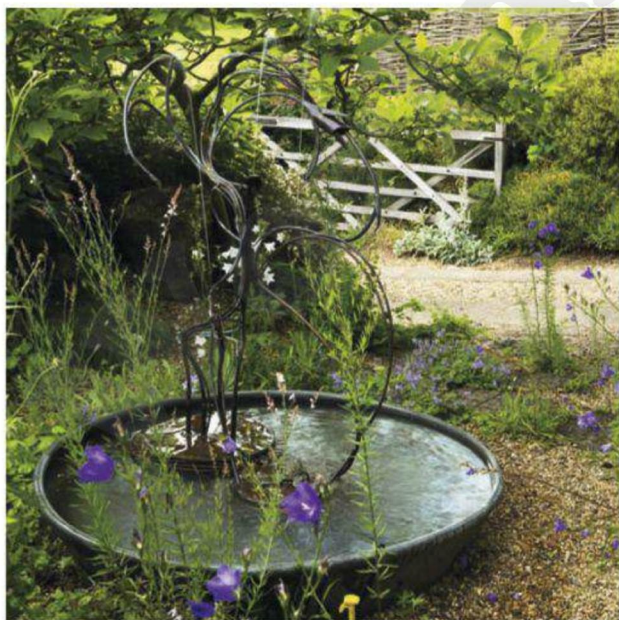
5 Green roofs for small buildings

The best way to reduce the visual impact of a shed or bin store is to add a green roof planted with anything from sedums to succulents, ferns and grasses. Have fun but stick to plants that suit the location.



6 Gate

Try to link the style of your garden gate to suit your house and garden. This rustic gate works perfectly with the informal cottage-style garden. Welcoming and functional, without blocking the view beyond.



7 Wildlife friendly

The best way of enticing wildlife into your garden is by providing water. Still or moving, from a simple vessel to an elaborate fountain, birds in particular will relish somewhere to drink and preen themselves.



8 Small trees

Don't be put off planting a small tree. Choose carefully and prune regularly and it can look very effective. Some large shrubs such as *Photinia fraseri* can be pruned formatively to look like a small tree. □

As I arrive at Sue Martin's cottage, the playground chatter of the village school fades into the gentle splashing water on the other side of the hedge. Once in the garden, a handsome rustic pergola guides you towards its source: an elegant, stone-framed pond and fountain. Here, classic borders of box, euphorbia, alliums and aquilegia are energised by the burnt orange-pink tones of *Geum* 'Hilltop Beacon' and the fiery orange of 'Prinses Juliana' (both pictured on page 53).

Sue holds a National Collection of *Geum* – 98 different cultivars to date – and has created an enchanting cottage garden to present her plants in a natural and comfortable way. Sue describes her geums as an extension of her family – “like children” – and although there are areas devoted to them, most of the collection is given freedom to mingle.

Spring highlights

Sue plants masses of spring bulbs among the geums and loves combinations such as spiky, orange-leaved *Libertia peregrinans* with small orange-flowered *Geum* 'Nordek'. In early summer 'Hilltop Beacon' adds depth to swathes of ox-eye daisies and later 'Prince of Orange' lights up *Helenium* 'Moerheim Beauty'. The garden has a bewitching and ever-fluctuating collection of *Aquilegia* – originating from her earliest forays into serious gardening, helping at the Hardy Plant Society's Chelsea stands. Now, tiny purple buttons of an unnamed aquilegia provide a rich foil to the brilliant, frilled red of *Geum* 'Red Wings'.

'Red Wings' flowers for nine weeks from April until June. Sue knows this

In brief

WHAT Plantswoman's cottage garden.

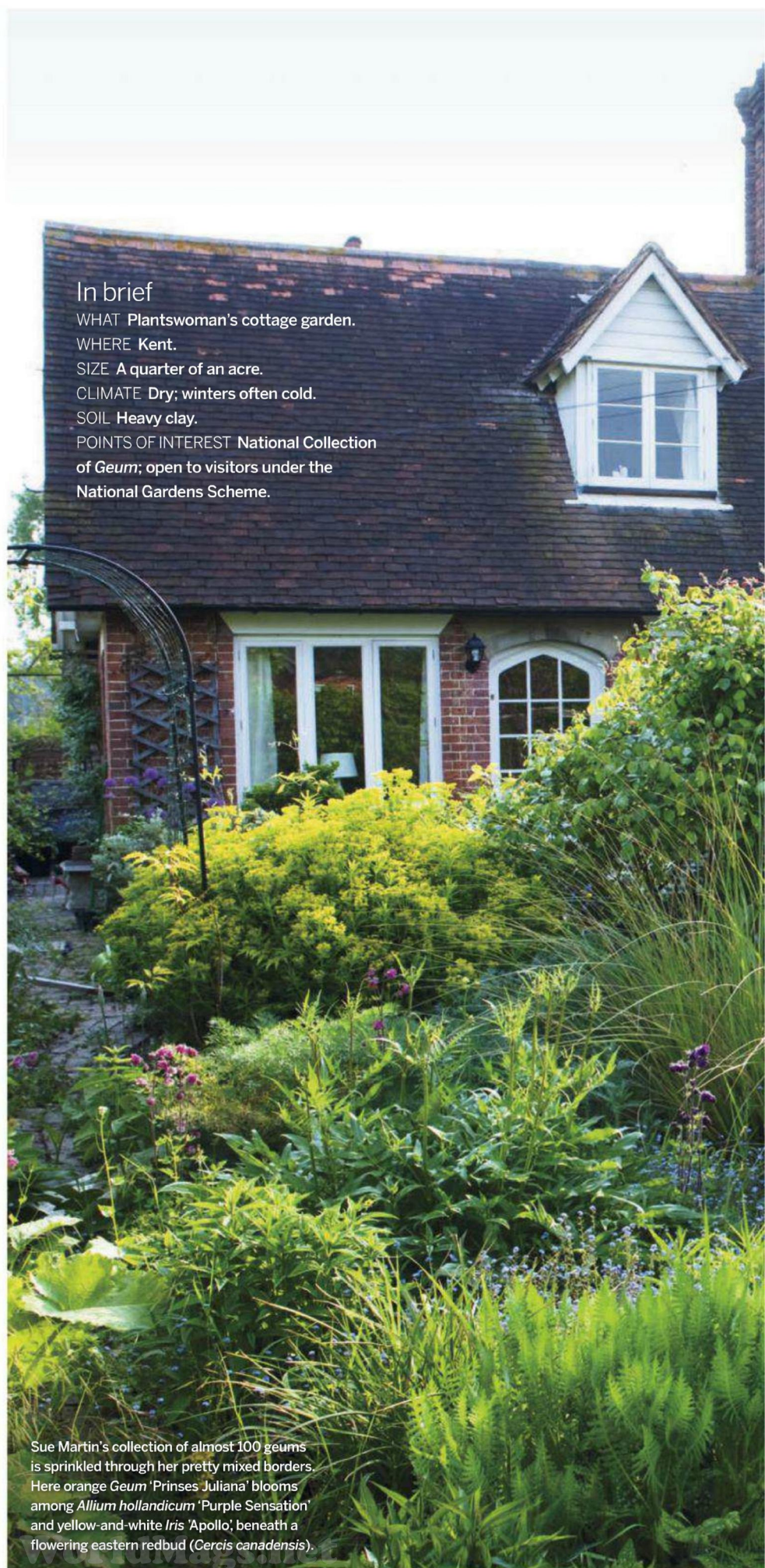
WHERE Kent.

SIZE A quarter of an acre.

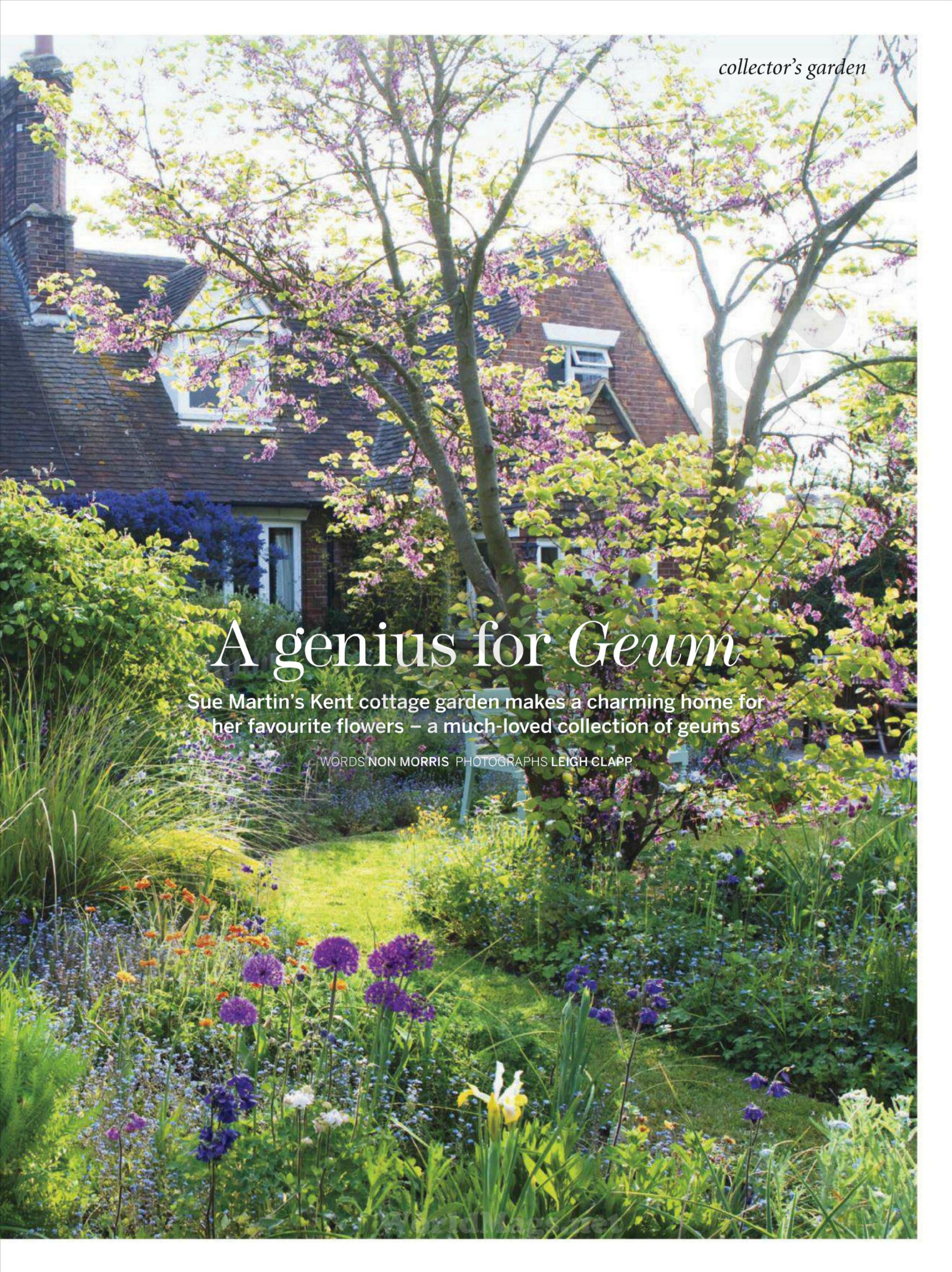
CLIMATE Dry; winters often cold.

SOIL Heavy clay.

POINTS OF INTEREST National Collection of *Geum*; open to visitors under the National Gardens Scheme.



Sue Martin's collection of almost 100 geums is sprinkled through her pretty mixed borders. Here orange *Geum* 'Prinses Juliana' blooms among *Allium hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation' and yellow-and-white *Iris* 'Apollo'; beneath a flowering eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*).



collector's garden

A genius for *Geum*

Sue Martin's Kent cottage garden makes a charming home for her favourite flowers – a much-loved collection of geums

WORDS NON MORRIS PHOTOGRAPHS LEIGH CLAPP

“ the garden feels intimate and enclosed... The effect of green upon green suggests a garden that extends beyond its quarter-acre plot ”

▷ because she keeps meticulous records. Her wonderfully detailed NCCPG handbook is often revelatory: one favourite, the scarlet ‘Rubin’, flowers for an extraordinary 20 weeks from April into September.

When Sue arrived 23 years ago the garden was “a goldfish bowl in the middle of a village”. Now it feels intimate and enclosed. Beyond the pergola is a lush stilted hedge of red-twigged limes, *Tilia platyphyllos* ‘Rubra’ – with a second hedge, of hawthorn and holly, immediately beyond it. The effect of green upon green suggests a garden that extends beyond its quarter-acre plot.

The previous owner had grown only vegetables: the cleared garden presented a clean slate and a deep layer of rich, well-manured soil over the existing heavy clay. The apple tree ‘Beauty of Bath’ (pictured opposite, top right) was the only tree. Its gnarled presence remains an important focal point and is the perfect place for a table and chairs.

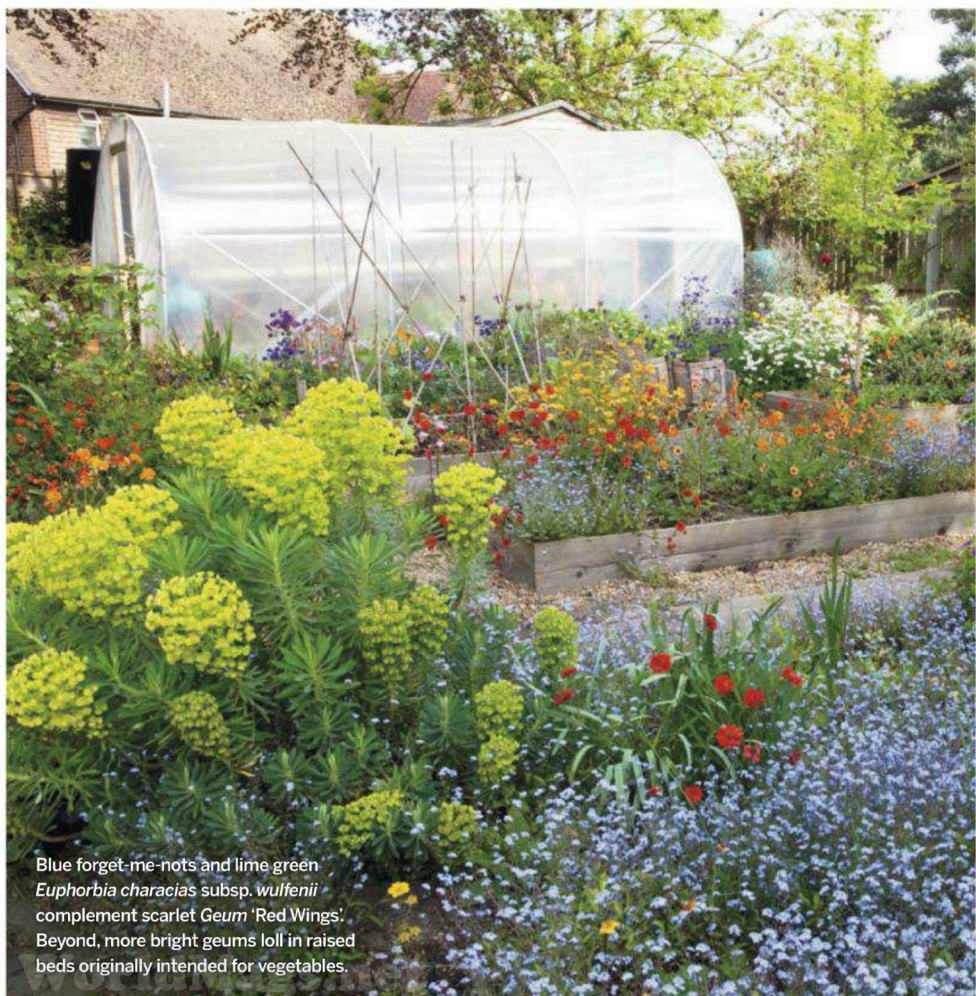
Wonderful woody plants

Sue’s choices of trees and shrubs are finely judged. An early selection was an eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), with heart-shaped, apple-green leaves and tiny mauve flowers. There is the wonderful rounded hawthorn, *Crataegus persimilis* ‘Prunifolia’ underplanted with sheets of snowdrops in January, and a stand of shaggy, powder-grey *Elaeagnus* ‘Quicksilver’, whose gorgeous, powerful scent is perfectly timed for the most intense display of *Geum* in May. The generous screening quality of the *Elaeagnus* again cleverly suggests a complex garden with temptations around every corner.

Pre-grandchildren, the *Elaeagnus* bed was a pond. The old pond liner was never removed, and the resultant soil is moist and perfect for geums. Each area of the garden evolved in a similarly organic way. Unloading some new plants temporarily under the *Cercis* tree led to the pool-like bed at its base. Reading Beth Chatto’s diaries led to an unstoppable desire for a yellow ▷



In spring the borders include lots of self-sown *Aquilegia* hybrids. “I originally had several named varieties including ‘William Guinness’, ‘Port Wine’, ‘Norah Barlow’ and a white one, but these have all interbred over the years,” says Sue.



Blue forget-me-nots and lime green *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii* complement scarlet *Geum* ‘Red Wings’. Beyond, more bright geums loll in raised beds originally intended for vegetables.

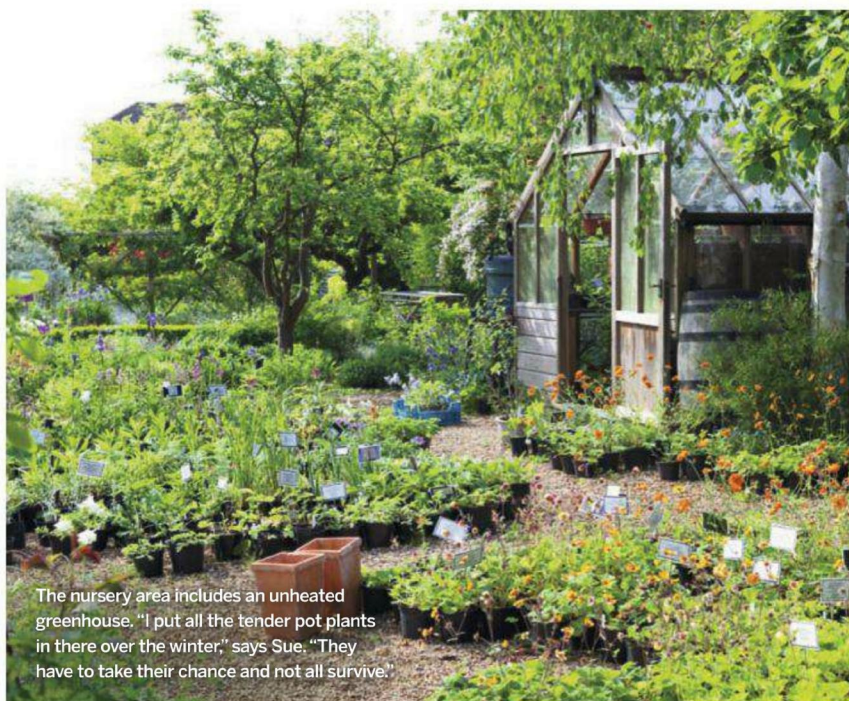


collector's garden

Jewel-like *Geum* seedlings, blue *Centaurea montana* and more *Iris* 'Apollo' make a vibrant low planting. Beyond small trees and shrubs such as *Elaeagnus* 'Quicksilver' (left), apple tree 'Beauty of Bath' (centre) and a flowering *Kolkwitzia amabilis* (right) make a lush backdrop.



The rustic chestnut pergola was created mainly as a design feature – "I do grow climbers up it but try to select ones that will not get too big and cover it up too much," says Sue.



The nursery area includes an unheated greenhouse. "I put all the tender pot plants in there over the winter," says Sue. "They have to take their chance and not all survive."

“I get very excited when the geums begin to flower each year... as long as it is not freezing cold I try to get out there whenever I have time”

▷ border, from there to the purchase of her first *Geum* ('Prinses Juliana') and eventually to a specialist symposium in Devon where she learned that the bold yellow *Geum* she believed to be 'Lemon Drops' was in fact misnamed. Beth Chatto describes the "true" 'Lemon Drops' with her usual quiet elegance: 'drooping heads of greenish yellow single flowers, clasped in green'; Sue was hooked.

Chance seedlings are constantly occurring and so far two good, strong growers have been propagated. There's the glowing orange 'Olympic Flame' and the soft yellow 'Dawn', which flowers "almost continuously from April until mid-November".

This is a comfortable, expert garden with a timeless, romantic sensibility – picket fences and sun-warmed benches, raised beds of reds and oranges spilling into a foam of clear blue and acid green. The soft, relaxed air is achieved through Sue's daily tending and adjusting. "I have decided this is the hardest kind of gardening," she sighs, smiling forbearingly at an ocean of forget-me-nots.

If she had her time again she would have wider paths – a practical idea but, as with the forget-me-nots, it is all a question

of balance. The pergola and immaculate lawns already offer a certain calm but elsewhere, it is the soft, meandering atmosphere created by the brimful nature of the planting that is so charming. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Brickwall Nursery, 1 Brickwall Cottages, Frittenden, Kent TN17 2DH.

OPEN Suns & Mons, 29 April-28 May, 11am-5pm, under the National Gardens Scheme. TEL 01580 852425

WEBSITE www.geumcollection.co.uk

FURTHER READING *Geum* by Sue Martin (NCCPG, 2009); See also issue 137 of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED for Sue's *Geum* profile. WHERE TO BUY GEUMS Sue offers a range of geums by mail order and at her open days.

Other recommended *Geum* suppliers are:

• **Beeches Nursery** Essex. Tel 01799 584362, www.beechesnursery.co.uk

• **Chipchase Castle Nursery** Northumberland. Tel 01434 230083, www.chipchaseplants.co.uk.

• **Hardy's Cottage Plants** Hampshire. Tel 01256 896 533, www.hardys-plants.co.uk

Sue Martin's favourite geums

1 *Geum* 'Red Wings'

"A first class chiloense cultivar," says Sue. Red-tinged stems bear double or semi-double flowers, typically for at least nine weeks from April to June. Pictured with a mauve-pink aquilegia.

2 *G. 'Lady Stratheden'*

This popular cultivar thrives in sun or part shade, flowering for ten weeks from early May, and comes true from seed. It holds an Award of Garden Merit (AGM) from the Royal Horticultural Society.

3 *G. 'Hilltop Beacon'*

Sue describes this as "A very vigorous cultivar", which flowers from mid-April to mid-August. Strong green stems up to 80cm tall.

4 *G. 'Prinses Juliana'*

Neat deep-orange flowers that pale with age: a rather lax 74cm in height. Flowers mid-April to the end of July or beyond – as late as December in some years.

5 Collection holder Sue Martin

"I get very excited when the geums begin to flower each year," says Sue. "I love being outside working in the garden and as long as it is not freezing cold I try to get out there whenever I have time."

6 *G. 'Mandarin'*

This attractive cultivar has large, frilly double pale orange flowers emerging from yellow buds.

7 *G. rivale* 'Deep Rose'

"This flowers in almost constant shade for eight weeks from mid-March to mid-May," says Sue. Its dark red stems bend over the drooping, deep-rose pink flowers.

8 *G. 'Dawn'*

"A strong grower that has flowered almost continuously from early April until the middle of November," says Sue. The flowers are a soft yellow inside, with frilly petals and deep orange on the outside.

9 *G. 'Hannay's'*

Sue rates this as "a promising newcomer" because of its colour – mid-orange with deeper orange veins – and because it "flowers profusely over a long period".



Tim Richardson

Garden writers have recently been accused of being a soft-centred lot. Not so Tim Richardson, who is described by *The Telegraph*, where he has been a contributor for 11 years, as an ‘irreverent commentator on all matters pertaining to gardens.’ At the age of 43 he is one of the most respected critics of contemporary landscape and garden design. He is not afraid to criticise the work of some of the gardening world’s biggest names or challenge the judging process at the RHS shows. But ruffling feathers doesn’t bother him, he explains when we meet at the South Bank, as long as his criticism is justified and he isn’t being personal.

“There’s a strong hunger for something that can unite everyone across the whole spectrum of landscape, design, garden history and horticulture”

His new role as director of Chelsea Fringe, the UK’s first gardening fringe festival, is a change of direction. It is also perhaps his biggest challenge yet, not only because he is heading up a huge team of volunteers but because it’s being run on an open-access principle: as long as the projects are interesting, about plants and gardening, and legal, they can be included.

Tim – who grew up in Berkshire, where his grandfather had been a head gardener – knows how fringe festivals work, having taken part in the Edinburgh Fringe twice. However, it wasn’t treading the boards that gave him his evident self-confidence. Laughing at the memory, he relates that at the age of 16, as the only boy in his school taking A-level art history (which he mainly taught himself), he gave lectures on Palladio’s villas and on the street furniture of Reading to the boys who did art. At this stage his ambition was to be an art gallery

Poetry and art history inspired the writer and founder of the forthcoming Chelsea Fringe with a love of landscape gardens

WORDS ANNIE GATTI PHOTOGRAPH CHARLIE HOPKINSON

curator, but his choice of college (Pembroke) at Oxford University, where he studied English literature, ignited his passion for 18th-century poetry. “This naturally led me to landscape gardens and my visit to Studley Royal was a real turning point,” he explains. “The 18th-century landscape garden is the most incredible art form and is still, for me, the touchstone.”

A stint of writing and performing comedy followed but then he decided

to try publishing. He landed a job on the four-volume *RHS Dictionary* and spent 18 months researching and then writing and editing all the biographical entries. Soon not only was he deeply knowledgeable about the world’s key designers, botanists and nurserymen but, en route to the herbarium library at Kew, he also learned the names of all the plants he passed by. “It was a fantastic job and cemented my interest in gardens as a subject.”

He joined *Country Life*, where he still writes theatre reviews, and became editor of the gardening pages. Contemporary garden design had by then become another passion and he launched a niche magazine, *New Eden*, which with its square format and bold design was ahead of its time. Unfortunately it folded after one year. 2000 was a pivotal year for Tim: he and his wife Claire Whalley, who is a TV director, had their first son and *The Garden Book*,

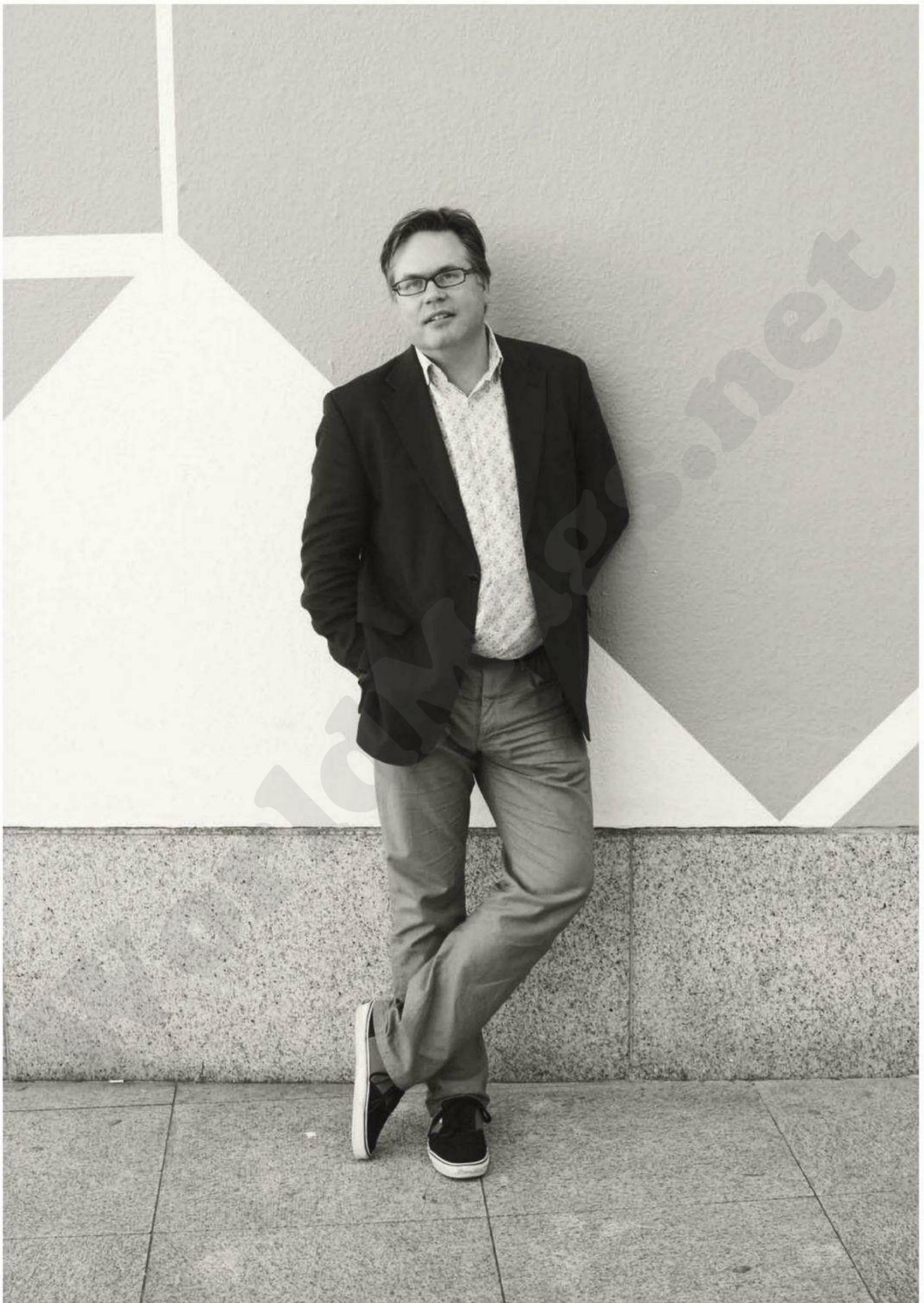
a directory of 500 great gardens edited by Tim, was published. Being made redundant the following year led to his present career in journalism, garden history and books. In his spare time he writes poetry and is in charge of the fruit in the family garden.

In 2007 Tim and writer Noël Kingsbury established Vista, a series of platform talks with leading designers and landscapers at the Garden Museum in London. Chelsea Week Vista became a fixture when, hot from the show ground, they would have a lively debate about the show gardens. It was when he was discussing with Noël what else they might do linked to Chelsea Week that Tim suddenly got the idea of a fringe event. “There’s a strong hunger for something that can unite everyone across the whole spectrum of landscape, design, garden history and horticulture and the fringe can do that.”

Since the announcement last June, ideas for projects have been clogging up Tim’s inbox. “There have been some truly amazing things that I would never have dreamed of,” he says. An eye-opener has been how many young people come to gardening through environmental activism. “For them, gardening is not necessarily in their own back yard, they look on it as a communal activity.”

“Gardening is about expression,” he adds, “and the Chelsea Fringe can encourage people to express themselves. For me, that is what’s so exciting about it.” □

• The fringe runs from 19 May to 10 June. Details at www.chelseasfringe.com
NEXT MONTH Designer Mark Gregory.



In brief

WHAT *Cornus*, a genus of around 60 mainly deciduous, woody species from the family *Cornaceae*; The dogwoods in this feature all bear flowers comprised partly of large, showy bracts.

COMMON NAME Dogwood, cornel.

ORIGINS Northern hemisphere.

SEASON Flowers in spring or summer, autumn fruits and rich leaf colour.

SIZE From trees of 25m in height to a dwarf creeping dogwood, *Cornus canadensis*, only 20cm high.

CONDITIONS Most are hardy and thrive in a variety of neutral to acid soils.

Cornus

Shrubs and small trees that bear showers of showy bracts in late spring or summer

WORDS TONY KIRKHAM PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREA JONES



CORNUS VENUS (= 'KN30 8')

With bracts up to 15cm across, this is one of the largest-flowering dogwoods. It results from a cross between *C. kousa* and *C. nuttallii*, made at Rutgers University in New Jersey, USA. Height (H) 6m, spread (S) 4m. SEASON Late May to June.



Tony Kirkham is head of arboretum at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, where he is responsible for the collection of 14,000 trees

When we think of dogwoods in the garden, we are quick to picture the coloured winter stems of *Cornus alba* or *C. sericea*, but in fact dogwoods belong to a diverse genus of around 60 species. They range in habit from trees to large and small shrubs, including a dwarf creeping, suckering dogwood, *Cornus canadensis*, which is only 20cm high.

Nearly all dogwoods are deciduous, except for *Cornus capitata* and a more recent introduction to specialist collections, *Cornus hongkongensis*, both of which require a mild, forgiving climate in the south of England if you are to get the best out of their flowering.

The dogwoods that bear the most attractive flowers have four white, cream or pink petal-like bracts surrounding a tight, round flower, followed in autumn by strawberry-like fruits. These include *Cornus kousa*, *C. florida*, *C. nuttallii* and *C. capitata*.

Cornus is a genus of hardy species and I have not seen dogwoods suffer or be damaged by winter cold or late spring frosts in the arboretum at Kew. The soil requirements of the flowering dogwoods vary from natural to acid soils and are adaptable to a variety of soil types, but prefer free-draining, rich loam; however most will tolerate even drought-prone soil. They can be grown in full sun or shade, which makes them an extremely versatile shrub in the garden.

I have seen flowering dogwoods in their natural habitat on the west coast of the USA and in China, but only in the autumn, when I have been seed-collecting for Kew. They often resemble scruffy specimens tucked away on the edge of woodlands, where they are looking for that sunlight that will encourage them to flower. I remember climbing a large wide-spreading tree about 10m tall of the Chinese variety of the Japanese dogwood (*C. kousa* var. *chinensis*) in the mountains of north-eastern Sichuan to collect the strawberry-like fruits, wondering both if, one day, I would ever see a plant this large in cultivation, and what this specimen must have looked like in June, clothed from head to toe in the virginal, white-bracted flowers (see page 62).

“ Several Japanese dogwoods... are very easy to place with other plants because of their natural flower colours ”

▷ Several Japanese dogwoods, including ‘Moonbeam’, ‘Madame Butterfly’, ‘China Girl’ (all pictured on page 61) and ‘Miss Satomi’ (far right) have found their way into our gardens today and are very easy to place with other plants because of their natural flower colours, interesting bark and beautiful shades of autumn colour. These all-rounders work hard to earn their position in the garden.

The other western Chinese species is the evergreen *Cornus capitata* (see page 62). This has been hybridised by plant breeders with the Japanese dogwood to create two of the best flowering dogwoods for the garden, *C. ‘Porlock’* (page 61) and *C. ‘Norman Hadden’* (page 62).

Many believe the common dogwood, *C. florida*, to be one of the most beautiful small trees in North America. It is a good all-rounder with crocodile-like bark, shiny red fruits in clusters and a deep-red autumn leaf colour, but susceptible to anthracnose (see *Diseases*, page 61). However, several cultivated forms are resistant to anthracnose, including ‘Sunset’ (opposite), ‘Apple Blossom’ (below right) and *C. florida f. rubra* (above right), one of the best pink-flowering types.

On the opposite coast is the Pacific dogwood, *Cornus nuttallii*, which can be seen flowering in the mixed forest edges during April and May with more fussy climatic needs and again a susceptibility to the dreaded anthracnose.

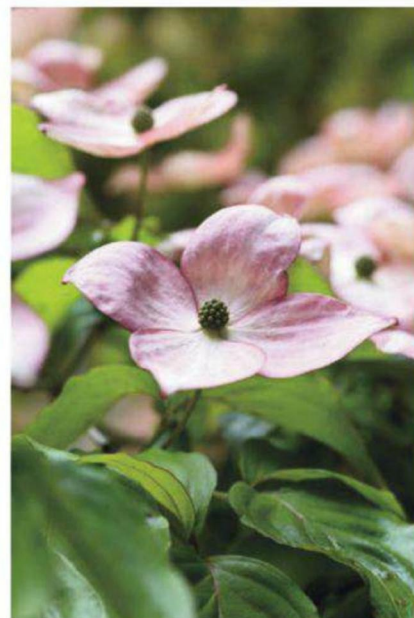
Crossing east with west has resulted in two popular cultivars, *C. ‘Eddie’s White Wonder’* (page 63) and a plant that has stolen the show for many years by the main gate at Kew during May, *C. ‘Ormonde’* (page 60). More recent, and more interesting, hybrids between *C. kousa* and *C. florida* have been bred by Dr Elwin Orton at Rutgers University in the USA. These upright trees are resistant to anthracnose, flower for ages and have fine autumn colour; the cultivars to make space for include *C. Aurora* (= ‘Rutban’), *Celestial* (= ‘Rutdan’) and ‘Constellation’.

• Tony Kirkham’s choice of *Cornus* continues over the next five pages. ▷



CORNUS FLORIDA f. RUBRA

This is one of the most beautiful of the pink-flowering dogwoods, with rose-pink bracts. Sometimes also sold as *C. florida ‘Rubra’*. SEASON Flowers May to June. H 6m, S 8m.



C. KOUSA ‘MISS SATOMI’

This free-flowering cultivar is named after a Japanese nurseryman’s granddaughter and bears large, rich-pink flower bracts in profusion. AGM*. SEASON Flowers June. H 5m, S 6m.



C. FLORIDA ‘APPLE BLOSSOM’

A small spreading tree requiring full sun. The flower bracts are a pale pink fading to white in the centre. SEASON Flowers May to June; good autumn leaf colour. H 6m, S 6m.



C. KOUSA ‘HEART THROB’

This introduction from Japan bears deep pink flower bracts amid bronze-tinged leaves. SEASON Flowers late May to June; strong autumn leaf colours. H 7m, S 5m.

DAVID LAZINSKI / GAP PHOTOS

*AGM – HOLDS AN AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT FROM THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY



CORNUS FLORIDA 'SUNSET'
(='CHEROKEE SUNSET')

This pink-bracted cultivar can be grown for its foliage alone, which starts with a hint of pink before turning green, followed by a rich red-purple in the autumn. SEASON Flowers May to June; foliage all season. H 8m, S 8m.

THOMAS ALAMY / GAP PHOTOS



CORNUS 'ORMONDE'

A wide-spreading, medium-sized tree with large, rounded white-cream flower bracts with a pink blush towards the end of the flowering season. A hybrid of *C. florida* and *C. nuttallii*. SEASON Flowers April; beautiful red autumn leaf colour. H 4m, S 6m.



CORNUS KOUSA 'MADAME BUTTERFLY'

The delicate, upright, pointed white flower bracts resemble butterflies perched throughout this large shrub or small tree.
SEASON Flowers June. H 5m, S 5m.



C. KOUSA var. CHINENSIS 'CHINA GIRL'

This small, erect tree bears flowers composed of small bracts that open a creamy-green, turning creamy-white as they get larger.
SEASON May to June. H Up to 6m, S 5m.



C. KOUSA 'MOONBEAM'

A floriferous dogwood that comes into its own at the end of the day, when the late summer sun brings the reflective flowers to life.
SEASON May to June. H 8m, S 6m.



C. 'PORLOCK'

The bracts of this semi-evergreen tree open creamy white and gradually turn pink. A hybrid of *C. capitata* and *C. kousa*, it needs a sheltered spot. AGM. SEASON June to July. H 10m, S 5m.

Planting

Young container-grown or root-balled plants can be planted in the garden at any time, but preferably during the dormant season between October and the end of March. They should be given a good organic mulch to help them establish, taking care to keep it away from the trunk, as the bark is susceptible to rot. Ensure that they receive water during dry spells. Keeping the plant healthy and stress-free will give the best results.

Diseases

Dogwood anthracnose or *Discula destructiva* is a fungal disease that arrived in the UK in the 1990s, probably on infected nursery plants from North America. During the growing season it kills the leaves and young shoots of the two North American species, *C. florida* and *C. nuttallii*, and their cultivars.

The symptoms are spots or blotches on the leaf, which spread during wet conditions. The leaf shrivels and eventually falls. A tree or shrub can be completely defoliated during a severe infection. Small raised spots can be seen on the stems of infected plants and during wet conditions the young stems will die back.

Raking up and burning fallen leaves is a cultural means of reducing the impact of the infection, but the planting of more resistant cultivars is more successful and preferred. *Cornus kousa* and its cultivars are generally thought to have better resistance to this disease.

If there is a need to prune out dieback or any infected stems, it is important to sterilise the secateurs or saw with alcohol to prevent spreading the infection in the same plant or to other specimens.

“ Unlike many other woody plants, these dogwoods will flower profusely without the need for pruning ”

Pruning

Unlike many other woody plants, these dogwoods will flower profusely without the need for pruning, apart from removing diseased limbs (see previous page). Light pruning will keep your plants to a suitable size.

Where to see and buy

GARDENS

• Exbury Gardens

Exbury, Southampton, Hampshire
SO45 1AZ. Tel 023 8089 1203,
www.exbury.co.uk

• Newby Hall

Cornus National Collection holder.
Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 5AE.
Tel 0845 4504068,
www.newbyhallandgardens.com

• Sir Harold Hillier Gardens

Jermyns Lane, Ampfield, Romsey,
Hants SO51 0QA. Tel 01794 369 318,
www3.hants.gov.uk/hilliergardens

• The Valley Gardens

The Royal Landscape, Windsor
TW20 0UU. Tel 01784 435544,
www.theroyallandscape.co.uk

NURSERIES

• Bluebell Nursery

Cornus kousa cultivars. Smisby,
Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Derbyshire
LE65 2TA. Tel 01530 413700,
www.bluebellnursery.com

• Junker's Nursery

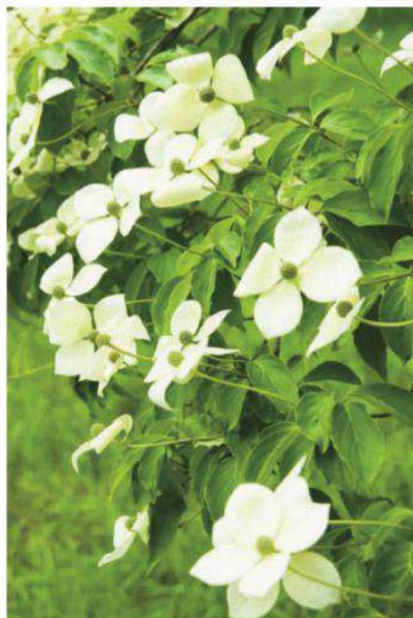
Visits by appointment only. Higher
Cobhay, Milverton, Somerset TA4 1NJ.
Tel 01823 400075, www.junker.co.uk

• Larch Cottage Nurseries

Melkinthorpe, Penrith, Cumbria
CA10 2DR. Tel 01931 712404,
www.larchcottage.co.uk

Acknowledgements

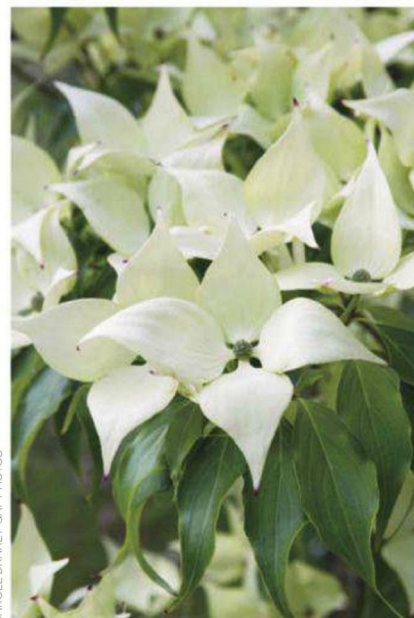
Thanks to the following for allowing us to photograph their plants for this feature: Secretts of Milford, Surrey, tel 01483 520500, www.secretts.co.uk; Sir Harold Hillier Gardens (see above). □



CAROLE DRAKE / GAP PHOTOS

CORNUS 'NORMAN HADDEN'

This semi-evergreen tree prefers some shelter and partial shade. The bracts gradually turn pink. AGM. SEASON Flowers June; fruits and coral-coloured leaves in autumn. H 5m, S 5m.



C. KOUSA 'GREENSLEEVES'

A vigorous, well-shaped tree with dark green, clean foliage, bearing large white pointed bracts with hints of green when grown in full sun. SEASON May. H 5m, S 4M.



MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY

C. KOUSA var. CHINENSIS

This large shrub or small tree is one of the most floriferous garden plants; large, virginal white blooms from top to bottom. AGM. SEASON Late May to June. H 7m, S 5m.



MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS

C. CAPITATA

This species can only be grown in milder areas, with protection from cold winds. Resistant to anthracnose (see page 61). SEASON Flowers June to July; evergreen foliage. H 12m, S 12m.



CORNUS 'EDDIE'S WHITE WONDER'

This round-crowned, upright tree is a real eye-catcher in the arboretum in late spring and autumn. Selected by a nurseryman from British Columbia called Henry Matheson Eddie for its large creamy-white flower bracts. A hybrid of *C. florida* and *C. nuttallii*. AGM. SEASON Flowers May. H Up to 6m, S 5m.

CLIVE NICHOLS / GARTHOTOS

It takes confidence, and no little courage, to dedicate one's garden primarily to the celebration of just two spectacular horticultural events. In spring, Charles Rutherfoord's south London garden is given over to a sensational show of massed tulips; in summer there is an expansive display of dahlias. The effect of such a bold approach to gardening in a relatively small space is breathtaking, but raises a number of aesthetic and practical questions.

Charles and his partner Rupert Tyler acquired the land that now comprises their west-facing garden in stages. When they first moved in, the house was divided into flats which, over more than two decades, they have gradually reunited as the properties have come up for sale. The garden they took on was a bramble patch, with bits of bicycle and shopping trolley thrown in.

Recently elected chairman of the Society of Garden Designers, Charles is also an architectural and furniture designer, and his first plan for the garden was very structured. He moved a large pile of spoil to make a change in levels and form a conical mound on which he planted bands of *Cistus* and *Ceanothus*. A series of planting experiments followed. First he tried growing a wheat field – it was flattened by a storm – then a sowing of sunflowers, which were promptly felled by squirrels.

By chance Charles got excited by tulips, and began buying them in quantity from bulb merchant Bloms. "I never for one minute thought they would look as good as they do at the Chelsea Flower Show – but they did." He now plants 2,000 tulips every autumn, selecting the bulbs from the Bloms stand at the Chelsea Flower Show for the following spring display. He tends to put at least two different colours together in each block of bulbs, although he admits that one of his most successful schemes arose when the bags of bulbs broke open in the box and he decided to plant them anyway, to great effect. ►

In brief

WHAT Plantsman's garden.

WHERE Clapham, southwest London.

SIZE 18m x 18m.

CONDITIONS Sheltered; mild winters, relatively low rainfall.

SOIL Sandy loam.

POINTS OF INTEREST Two big seasonal displays from tulips and dahlias.



The firework master

Designer Charles Rutherfoord starts the season with an explosive display of colour from massed plantings of tulips

WORDS MATTHEW WILSON PHOTOGRAPHS MARCUS HARPUR

Charles achieves a brilliant display of spring colour by planting 2,000 bulbs every year. Pink *Tulipa* 'Barcelona' is grown in a broad drift, while late-blooming, lily-flowered orange *T.* 'Fly Away' is planted in pots, dotted through the garden to draw the eye.



Seen from the house, a sculpture of a bull made from electrical conduit and steel has a brooding presence.

▷ Of course, such a homage to the tulip must lead to a rather large 'hole' in midsummer, mustn't it? "I'm not afraid of bare soil," says Charles, although in truth there are plenty of other plants to flourish in the gap between the tulips ending and the dahlias beginning. There are daylilies, delphiniums, cistus and roses, and the tulips are deadheaded but left in the ground in leaf until the dahlias are ready to plant out, ensuring that in fact bare earth is rarely on show.

Charles has worked hard to blur the boundaries of the garden with shrub plantings including *Amelanchier lamarckii*, *Rosa rugosa*, *Cotinus* 'Grace' and various rock roses (*Cistus*). He much appreciates tree

peonies; *P. rockii* and *P. suffruticosa* 'Cardinal Vaughan' are favourites. Boundary walls are draped with honeysuckle, fragrant *Holboellia latifolia* and clematis in variety.

The house is being absorbed into the garden, too; three terraces have been planted to create the impression of layers of greenery on varying levels down to the garden, part of Charles's aim to "make a seamless junction between the house and garden".

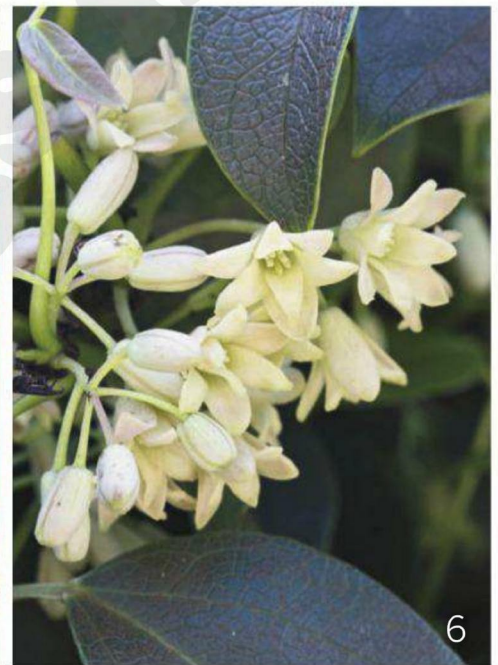
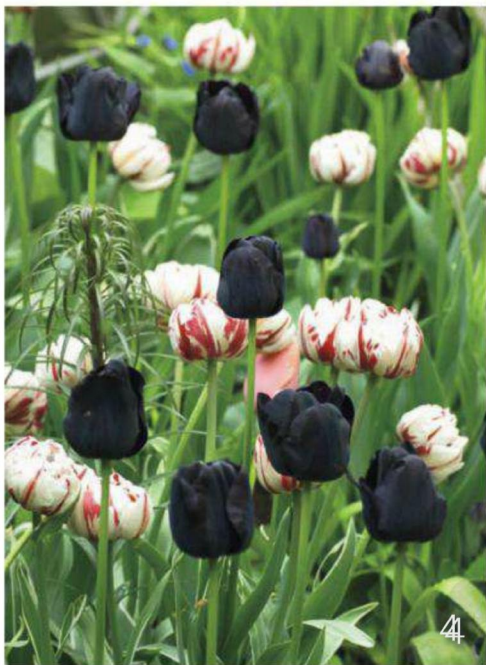
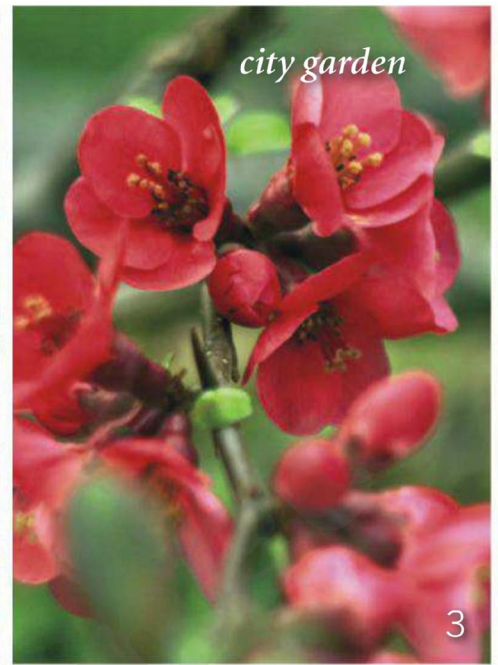
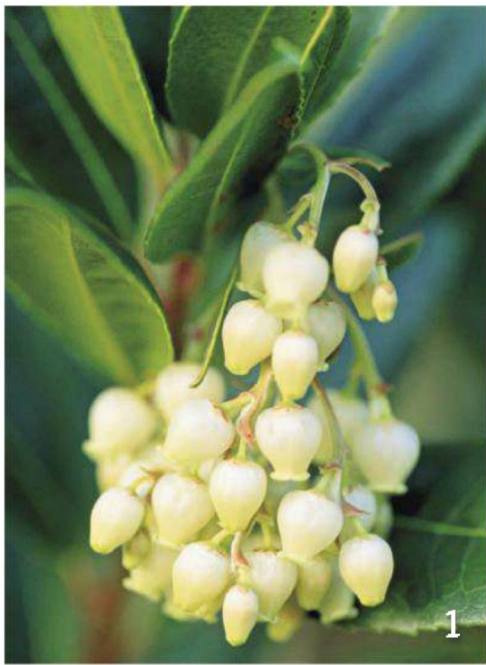
There is a geodesic glasshouse (pictured on page 64) and a superbly executed bull sculpture (above) – but aside from these and some basic paths and seating there is little hard landscaping. For Charles, the most important thing is the plants. "A lot of what I like most is the making, changing

and adapting of the garden," he says. Which perhaps explains the love of the spectacular horticultural event, ever in need of replanting and reinventing. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS 51 The Chase, London SW4 0NP.
OPEN 22 April, 2pm to 6pm; 24 April, 6pm to 8pm; 30 September, noon to 4pm, under the National Gardens Scheme. Also by appointment. TEL 020 7627 0182.

WEBSITES For more details of garden opening see www.ngs.org.uk; for more information about Charles Rutherfoord's other garden design projects see www.charlesrutherfoord.net



Favourite plants

Gorgeous tulips and perfect plants to grow them with, from owner Charles Rutherford

1 *Arbutus x andrachnoides*

The hybrid strawberry tree has all the qualities of *Arbutus unedo*; attractive, creamy white, bell-shaped flowers followed by round, strawberry-red fruit, but with the added benefit of cinnamon-coloured bark, which is especially lovely in winter.

2 *Tulipa* 'Barcelona' & *T.* 'Black Parrot'

Combining pink

'Barcelona' with the dark, brooding 'Black Parrot' provides a depth of colour that can sometimes be lacking with single-cultivar plantings.

3 *Chaenomeles japonica*

Japanese flowering quince is planted along the length of a fence made of railway sleepers spaced on blocks to create a chunky 'hit and miss' effect.

4 *Tulipa* 'Carnaval de Nice' & *T.* 'Paul Scherer'

The red and white of 'Carnaval de Nice' contrasts beautifully with its dark purple companion.

5 *Paeonia suffruticosa*

'Rimpo' The height of tree peonies complements the compact displays of tulips. 'Rimpo' has deep, ruby-purple flowers that are large enough to demand attention.

6 *Holboellia latifolia*

The unfortunately named 'sausage vine' (the fruits are sausage-shaped) is a vigorous, evergreen climber that will romp up to 5m. It bears heavily scented flowers, usually white but occasionally tinted with purple, in spring. Planted with winter-flowering *Chimonanthus praecox*, it ensures fragrance from winter into spring. Needs shelter from cold winter winds.

In brief

WHAT Olivers, a large country garden to a Georgian house.

WHERE near Colchester, Essex.

SIZE Seven acres, plus 15 acres of woodland and about 28 acres of fields and orchards.

CONDITIONS Temperatures sometimes reach -12°C in winter; frosts as late as May. Low rainfall, averaging between 50cm and 55cm per year.

SOIL Shallow, sandy and mostly acid, with the odd clay seam.

POINTS OF INTEREST Bluebell wood and spring planting.



At Olivers there's plenty of room for generous landscape features such as The Ride, a wide avenue through beech, hornbeam, hazel and rhododendrons towards a statue of Bacchus, a Victorian copy of Sansovino's marble in Florence. "Unlike the original he rather touchingly wears a fig leaf," says owner Gay Edwards.

Breathing space

With leafy woodland, sweeping lawns and vibrant spring plants, the gardens to this family home in Essex make an elegant place to relax

WORDS CAMILLA PHELPS PHOTOGRAPHS MARCUS HARPUR



The box parterres on the terrace are a bright mix of pale yellow and white wallflowers with tulips (dark purple 'Havran', 'White Bouquet', white-edged, black 'Jackpot', and a mystery pink one, sent to Gay in error by her supplier).

After daffodils, bluebells are the next seasonal waymarker, full of promise that summer can't be far away. Gay Edwards is fortunate enough to have a natural bluebell wood in her own garden (pictured on page 72). But this is just one of many spring charms at Olivers.

Gay has been developing the garden with her husband, David, for the past 30 years. She learned her craft through trial, error, experimentation and good advice, keeping extensive notebooks along the way. Now in her 70s, she is an inspired and passionate plantswoman and a tour around the garden with her is a horticultural treat.

The garden at Olivers is grand in scale, with sweeping views, befitting a large country house that while mainly Georgian, dates in part back to the 15th century. Yet it sits so comfortably in the landscape that the boundaries between the garden and its surroundings are almost invisible.

Mature trees and sumptuous borders edge the generous lawns. They blur into a meadow of pheasant's eye narcissus (*N. poeticus* var. *recurvus* – see page 73)

and cowslips (*Primula veris*) that slopes down towards the Roman river running through the bottom of the valley. Imposing yew buttresses frame summer perennial displays, and a trio of large ponds cascading into one another fade into the woodland. It's a gentle, undulating landscape, and the dry flatlands of Essex seem miles away.

Gay had no masterplan when she moved the family from London in 1981. Pastureland reached the terrace (above) until 1968, when the previous owners excavated the middle pond, cut the ride through the woods and planted the first yew hedges to frame the borders. There were some fine climbers on the house walls (including a glorious *Rosa banksiae* 'Lutea') and trees in the borders, but the underplanting was not inspiring, apart from a border made to a plan by Beth Chatto.

"I'd never tackled anything on this scale," says Gay. "It just came into being. I have magpie-picked ideas from so many gardens and estates. I used to visit as many as I could wherever I was – frequently, of course, letting admiration and optimism overcome realism about what would thrive here."

The basic hard landscaping around the house remains largely unchanged, although Gay's husband introduced two bridges and the temple; and a dramatic sculpture by London-based artist Ben Coope-Adams sits on the bank above the upper pond. "We ordered a gate and got a sculpture," she laughs.

But it is Gay's orchestration of the planting that defines Olivers. "I started with the beds near the house. I wanted to treat them as one large area. They are much deeper now and I love the evolution of the borders through the seasons." The key, she says, is to be ruthless about taking things out when they don't work.

Planting experiments

Gay has never been afraid to experiment and a garden of species roses in the woodland is just one trial that didn't work – it was too shady. Today, in addition to the bluebells, the woodland boasts a fantastic collection of rhododendrons that add a new dimension of colour and scent in spring. A deep pink-orange





The lawn – pros and cons

"Usually when I look out at the lawn I call it Vermin Park because it is wholly occupied by rabbits, moles, squirrels, magpies and pigeons," laughs Gay. "But its size does define the way the garden evolves from comparative formality to informal landscape. Besides it makes a great family football pitch, as well as a challenging croquet one."



A design by 18th-century landscape architect William Kent inspired the Covered Seat, which is set in a deep corner of the borders, among box balls, *Paeonia delavayi* and *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*.



Bluebells and white-flowered greater stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*) speckle the ground in a woodland dell of oak, hornbeam, beech and cherry.

Gay Edwards' top plants

1 *Prunus* 'Ukon'

This cherry has the palest lemon flowers and soft new coppery leaves.

2 *Cydonia oblonga*

The good old-fashioned culinary species of quince, with scented flowers to boot.

3 *Malus floribunda*

The Japanese crab apple starts off dark pinky red and gradually turns white. It has a lovely scent.

4 *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* 'Conroy'

Waxy pale orange flowers and wonderfully glaucous new foliage.

5 *Rosa banksiae* 'Lutea'

Joyously cheerful so early in the season. Gay's ancient specimen grows against the house; she keeps it vibrant by taking out key stems every third year.

6 *Paeonia mlokosewitschii*

It's fleeting but worth it for the pure lemon flowers. The seedheads are also fantastic, and it has good autumn colouring.

7 *Fritillaria persica* 'Adiyaman'

A gothic plant. The dark purple bloom and the grey-green leaves go well together.

8 *Narcissus poeticus* var. *recurvus*

The old pheasant's eye narcissus is one of Gay's all-time favourites, for the pure whiteness of the petals and its scent.

9 *Tulipa* 'Orange Favourite'

This one is gloriously overblown in its wanton shagginess.

▷ *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* 'Conroy' and a white *R. 'Loderi King George'* stand out against the flush of spring green on the trees.

Gay loves collecting species plants for their relative subtlety. "They are more a reflection of myself. I don't wear big bold designs, or bright clothes." Tulips are one of the exceptions to her rule. The box parterres are thick with them. Inspired by painter Claude Monet's garden at Giverny in northwestern France, they are underplanted with ruby gem wallflowers, blue and purple pansies and white forget-me-nots to anchor the display. Scent is as important as colour combinations: "I go

round the garden snuffing like a dog at this time of year," she smiles. "En route from the house to the vegetable garden, I plant more and more things that smell good, so that every time I'm passing, I get the delicious scents." In spring shrubs such as fragrant snowball (*Viburnum x carlcephalum*) and honey spurge (*Euphorbia mellifera*) are among her favourites.

But alongside the horticultural delights, Olivers is still a family garden. "It is not a showpiece. It is lived in, loved and well used and I'm not precious about it," says Gay.

An 18th-century description of Olivers, discovered in a history of Essex, refers to 'a

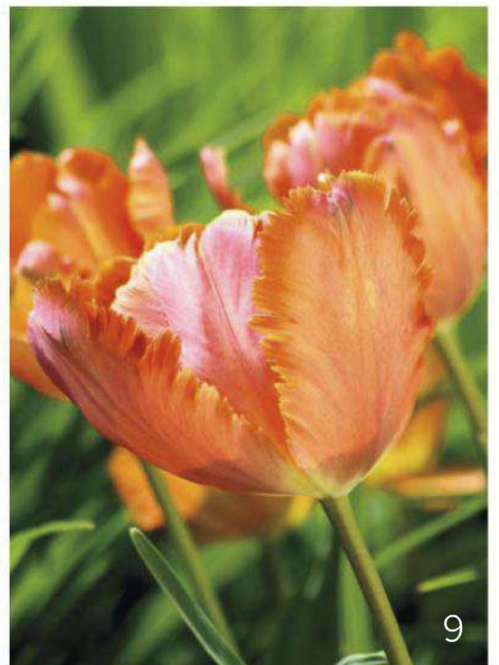
retired and agreeable place, with handsome gardens, canals and fishponds, and a wood adjoining cut out into pleasant walks'. Thanks to Gay and David Edwards, this description is now just as fitting today as it was centuries ago. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Olivers, Olivers Lane, Colchester, Essex CO2 0HJ. TEL 01206 330575.

WEBSITE www.ngs.org.uk

OPEN 28 April, noon to 6pm, and 29 April, noon to 5pm, under the National Gardens Scheme; also by appointment.





Garden projects for children

Entice children outside this Easter with green projects that transform old boxes, jars and wrapping paper into useful things for the garden, from seed packets to scarecrows

WORDS ANNEMARIE JAKOBSEN & INGER SKAARUP
PHOTOGRAPHS HEIDI LERKENFELDT/CONCEPT PICTURE LIBRARY

Seed packet

Recycle used paper as attractive seed packets that can be sized to fit any storage box. They also make a pretty way to give gifts of seeds to family and friends. You can write plant names and growing tips on a piece of solid-coloured paper and glue this to the back of the packet.

MATERIALS

- used gift wrap or pages from magazines or catalogues
- scissors
- double-sided tape
- optional: solid-coloured paper

TO MAKE Cut a piece of paper measuring 15cm x 20cm. Fold the two longer sides toward the middle, with one edge overlapping the other by about 1cm. Seal the join with double-sided tape. Fold up one of the short sides to within 3cm from the top. Trim off the folded-in edges of the top flap. Fill with seed, fold down the flap and close with a piece of double-sided tape.



Plastic scoop

Re-use plastic milk jugs by turning them into practical, lightweight scoops for potting soil, grass seed, fertiliser pellets or bird feed.

MATERIALS

- plastic milk jug, rinsed and labels removed
- permanent marker
- utility or hobby knife

TO MAKE Using the marker, draw a large 'U' on the jug, with the opening at the bottom and the rounded end just below the handle. With the utility knife, carefully cut out the bottom and then along the marked line. Finish by neatly rounding the edges.



SAFETY Some of these projects involve the use of sharp knives or drills so please supervise children appropriately.

Scarecrow

Old wooden crates and baskets make great scarecrows. For best bird-scaring effect, tie parts firmly together, but with enough give that they may move and rustle in the wind.

MATERIALS

- 2 fruit or vegetable boxes or baskets, one large and one smaller
- 2 bamboo sticks or branches, measuring 50cm-70cm and 1m-1.2m
- broomstick 1.5m-2m long
- string
- long grass, hay or straw
- optional: drill and large bit

TO MAKE Push the longer bamboo stick through the biggest container to make the arms. Tie together with string, then attach the broomstick in several places where parts cross. Stand your scarecrow up by simply pushing the broomstick into soil. Push grass through holes in the smaller container to make the 'hair' (make some holes with the drill if necessary). Attach the 'head' by pushing the short stick through the 'head' and into the 'body'. If more stability is needed, tie together with string where parts cross.

Storage jar and string holder

Reuse jars as containers for little bits and pieces in your shed. They are also a good way to store seed, if kept in a cool, shady place. And they make useful, tangle-free dispensers for string or raffia.

MATERIALS

- glass jars with screw-on lids, labels removed
- drill or hammer and nail
- ball of string
- paper
- scissors
- permanent marker
- glue

TO MAKE

For the string holder: simply put the lid, top side up, on a scrap piece of wood on a stable surface, and make a hole in the middle of the lid using the drill or hammer and nail. Put the string in the jar, push one end of the string through the hole in the lid and screw it on.

Storage jar: cut paper to fit the height and circumference of the jar. Using a marker, write the name of the contents on the paper, then glue paper on to jar. If container is to be used to store seeds, in addition to plant names, note growing information such as height, flowering time and colour. □

MORE IDEAS FOR CHILDREN

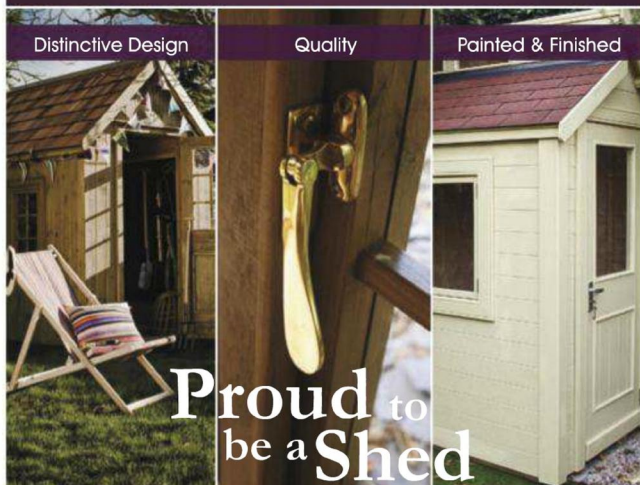
For further information on how to get children involved in gardening, including fascinating facts, colouring pages and ideas for fun projects, see www.rhs.org.uk/children



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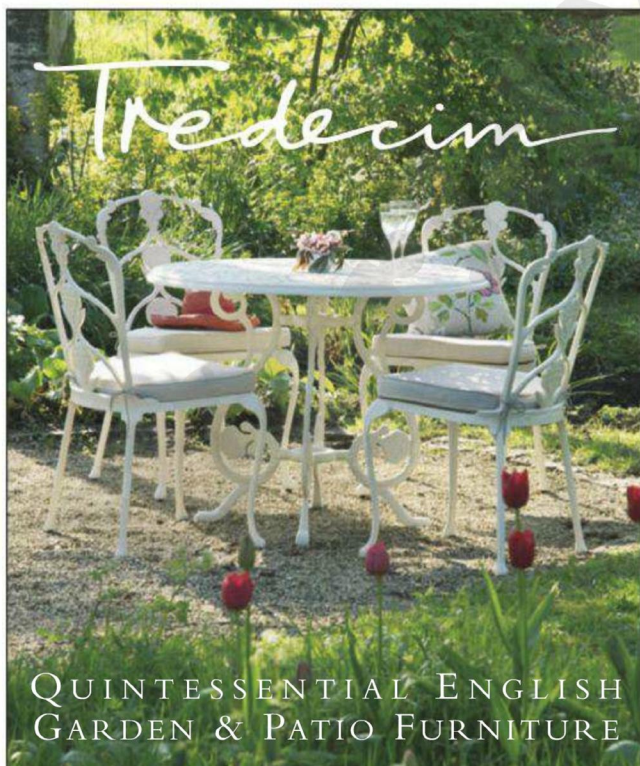
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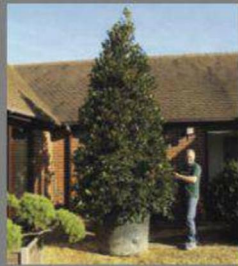
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design

Latest design news, design ideas



BRITT WILLOUGHBY/DIVER

Arne Maynard explains how streams, ponds, rills and waterfalls can add a special charm to any garden in *Design ideas* on page 84.

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News

COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI

INNOVATION

Ingenious crossings

Designer Richard La Trobe-Bateman has created a collection of highly individualistic bridges made from home-grown timbers, steel and wire rope. His Diamond Truss Bridge for Bedgebury Pinetum in Kent (pictured), a soaring triangle in oak and galvanised steel with a span of 14.5m, is his largest yet. An exhibition of his work, including pieces of furniture, starts on 3 April at the Crafts Study Centre, University for the Creative Arts, Farnham. Tel 01252 891450; www.csc.ucreative.ac.uk

ENVIRONMENT

Valuing trees

A new report backs up the ecological case for preserving and planting trees. Focusing on Torbay in Devon, the UK's first so-called i-Tree Eco project aims to quantify the environmental benefits that urban trees provide. The report concludes that the area's 818,000 trees remove around 50 tonnes of particulate air pollution from the atmosphere each year, and that large, mature trees offer the greatest benefit. The report can be read in full at www.treeconomics.co.uk



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'Sponge' is a textured, globe-shaped outdoor light, hand-made in Spain by designer Miguel Ángel García Belmonte, with a pitted earthenware outer shell and polyester resin inner layer which produces a warm, diffuse light.

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PROJECTS

Place to remember

A competition that drew 475 submissions from around the world to design a new AIDS Memorial Park in New York's West Village has been won by Brooklyn-based studio a+i for its *Infinite Forest* design. The triangular plot – across the street from the former St Vincent's Hospital, where many AIDS patients were treated – is planned both as a memorial and a peaceful public park. It is screened from the city by its mirrored boundary walls, which act as light wells for an underground Learning Centre and reflect an airy forest of white-barked birch trees.



AWARDS

Best builders named

London-based landscape company The Garden Builders was a double winner at the Association of Professional Landscapers Awards. The company took the award for best project with a value of more than £100,000 – and was also named this year's supreme winner – for the construction of a garden in north London, designed by Lynne Marcus Garden Design (pictured above). The judging panel praised the execution of the landscaping, which included sawn Yorkstone terracing, a reflective canal seen from the house and a bespoke gazebo in steel and wood. For details of winners in the other categories, see www.landscaper.org.uk

EVENTS

Experience the Expo

Floriade 2012, the World Horticultural Expo that takes place in the Netherlands once every ten years, opens on 5 April at Venlo. The 66-hectare park encompasses five themed areas separated by woods, and the overall theme is *The Theatre of Nature*. There are more than 100 exhibitors and Villa Flora, said to be the greenest office in the Netherlands, hosts Europe's largest indoor flower exhibition. A spectacular amphitheatre is the setting for an international programme of entertainment in the World Show Stage, where a striking rose garden marks the start of a cable car ride. Further details at www.floriade.com.



Notebook

• Garden designers Dan Pearson and Brita von Schoenaich are among the speakers at the Cheltenham Design Festival held at the Parabola Arts Centre in the Gloucestershire town on 20-22 April. For a full programme of events see www.cheltenhamdesignfestival.com

• Hestercombe House in Somerset is to be reunited with its surrounding landscape gardens for the first time in 60 years. The Hestercombe Gardens Trust is to take over the building under licence from Somerset County Council in early summer.

• Is there anything new in planting design? That's the question addressed by speakers Raymond Jungles, Tom Stuart-Smith, James Hitchmough and Christopher Woodward at the spring conference of the Society of Garden Designers on 28 April. Imperial College, Kensington, London. Book at www.sgd.org.uk

• Landscape designer Charles Jencks is in the spotlight at London's Garden Museum Vista evening on 17 April, chaired by Noël Kingsbury and Tim Richardson. To book visit www.gardenmuseum.org.uk

• Piet Oudolf and James Hitchmough discuss New Perennial plantings at a lecture organised by the Landscape Institute's Yorkshire and Humber branch. 19 April, the Rose Bowl, Leeds Metropolitan University. To book tickets visit the website, <http://floweringcities.eventbrite.co.uk>. □

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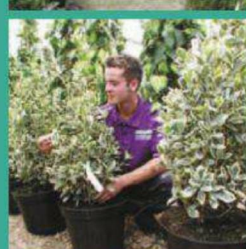
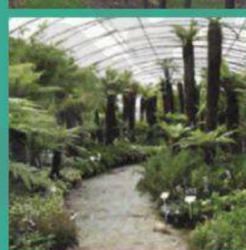
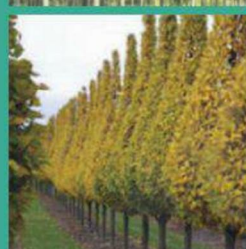
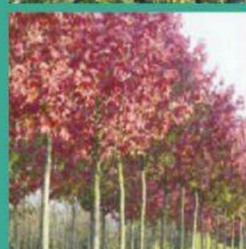
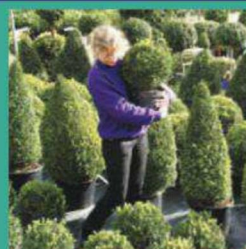
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Arne Maynard is a leading garden designer based in London and Monmouthshire

Water

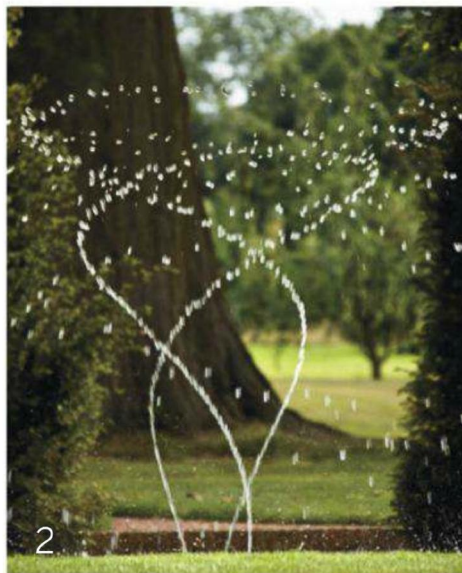
Gardens owe their whole existence to water. Without it we couldn't garden, so what better natural element to include?

WORDS ARNE MAYNARD





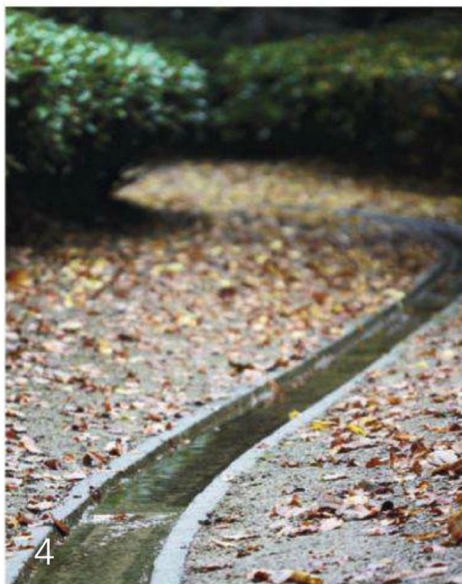
1 JASON INGRAM; 2-4 BRITT WILLLOUGHBY DYER



2



3



4

1 Looking glass

At Haddon Hall we have made a rectangle of water that is level with the grass, reflecting the sky, the tree-scape and the house. It is very simple – not so different from the effect of a dew-pond in a meadow – but its shape and setting create formality and a sense of modernity.

2 Water play

Playfulness was the mood I wanted to capture in this fountain for a simple pond. The fountain nozzle produces spray patterns like those from a revolving sprinkler hose, and the effect is both captivating and unpretentious, an elegant water dance.

3 Water music

The sound of moving water can be soothing and a useful distraction from noise pollution, perhaps in a city where traffic sounds are in the background. Here an unadorned lead pipe drops water into a stone trough, creating a focus that appeals to the senses.

4 Magic trail

The way water is captured and transported can be magical, as at Rousham in Oxfordshire, where the serpentine rill is a ribbon of water drawing you on a journey through the garden. This is an idea that can be translated into lots of garden situations, large or small.

5 Landing stage

Bodies of water need to be connected to the garden, and there should always be access points, so you can walk right up to the edge.

Here we've created a big oak platform so the owner's children can get into the river to swim, or use it to fish from, or tie a boat up.

6 Water colours

Iris sibirica 'Perry's Blue' on the banks of the same stream. Near water I like to use soft, pastel colours that harmonise with the environment – whites, pale blues and mauves.

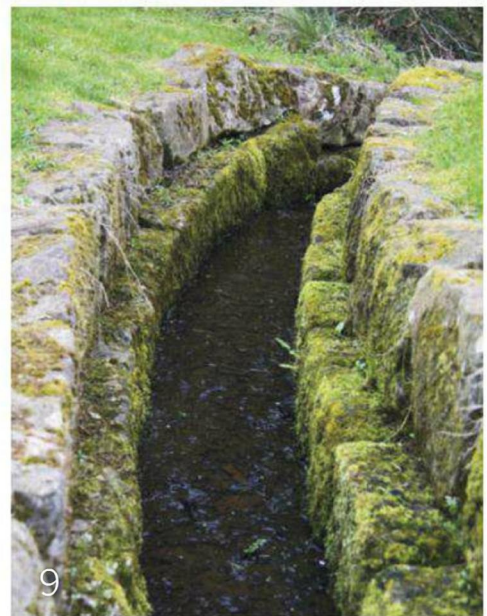
The only exception I make is the native yellow flag iris, *I. pseudacorus*.

7 Field research

Inspiration can often come from agriculture. A drinking pool for sheep in a field in Derbyshire creates a natural barrier and suggests ways that water could be used to make an effective but transparent division between two separate areas of a garden.

8 Water lilies

You don't always need to see the water, as this simple stone bowl of water lilies, at Montacute House in Somerset, demonstrates. Sometimes we place big stone troughs or water-tight terracotta pots with miniature water lilies on the edge of a terrace as lovely ornaments.



5, 6 & 9: JO BRITT; WILLOUGHBY DIVER; 7 WILLIAM COLLINSON; 8 ARNE MAYNARD

Man has always found ways to harvest water. And through harvesting water, he soon found he could make beauty from it. Whenever it is present, water adds magic. It is the heartbeat of the garden.

A garden that is fortunate enough to have a stream flowing through it, or a spring-fed pond, has a wonderful advantage, and in these instances I like to keep things looking very natural. Occasionally I may canalise part of a stream in order to make a formal feature in one part of the garden, and this can have a beauty of its own when done sympathetically, but for the most part I prefer to keep things as they are.

Man-made water features offer the opportunity to harness or channel water in different ways, using sound as well as movement to create a variety of moods. A flat, still surface creates an atmosphere of tranquillity; the vigour of a fountain that's bubbling or sending up jets of water has an energising effect. The art lies in placing water so as to make the most of its effect: the sound of a spout dripping lazily and gently back into water is hypnotic and peaceful, and in an enclosed space, a small courtyard say, creates an echoing quality that's relaxing and therapeutic, zen-like.

Water is energy, and the nicest thing in the world is the sense that it is continuous, as if it's



10

pouring out from mother earth. For this reason a water feature should never feel artificial; you should never be aware that it has been installed. For me, there's nothing worse than the interruption of this illusion of permanence – when someone has to flick a switch to turn on a fountain pump, or switch it off because they are going to a different part of the garden.

Ideally water features should be designed to perform all the time, and so the sound can be heard distantly from other parts of the garden. Subtlety is the key here, and the sound needs to be regulated so that it acts as a mood enhancer rather than an irritant.

An added benefit is that water brings wildlife into the garden, and with these creatures – birds, insects and perhaps fish and amphibians – comes another form of movement and subtle, natural sound. Still water has a different kind of power, and we also like to create sheets of reflective water that play with light. When a still pool is placed close to the house, reflections from the sky will bounce back from the surface of the water and into the house, making dappled patterns on the ceiling.

Adding water to the garden is all about its capacity to bring things to life. □

NEXT MONTH Knot gardens and parterres.

9 A natural resource

A beautiful example of how water can be formalised to suit the context. Here, water runs through a damson orchard in Warwickshire in the form of a deep canalised stream, lined with a double edge of mossy stone.

10 Wet and wild

It is important that planting at the margins of natural water feels appropriate.

On the banks of a millhouse garden in Wiltshire, we've kept the lush sedges and reeds, and spilled in just a few moisture-loving plants including *Iris sibirica*, camassias and astrantias.

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This hand-coloured engraving from 1613, by Basil Besler, features in *Painterly Plants*, a new book looking at the history of garden plants and their depiction by artists – see page 93.

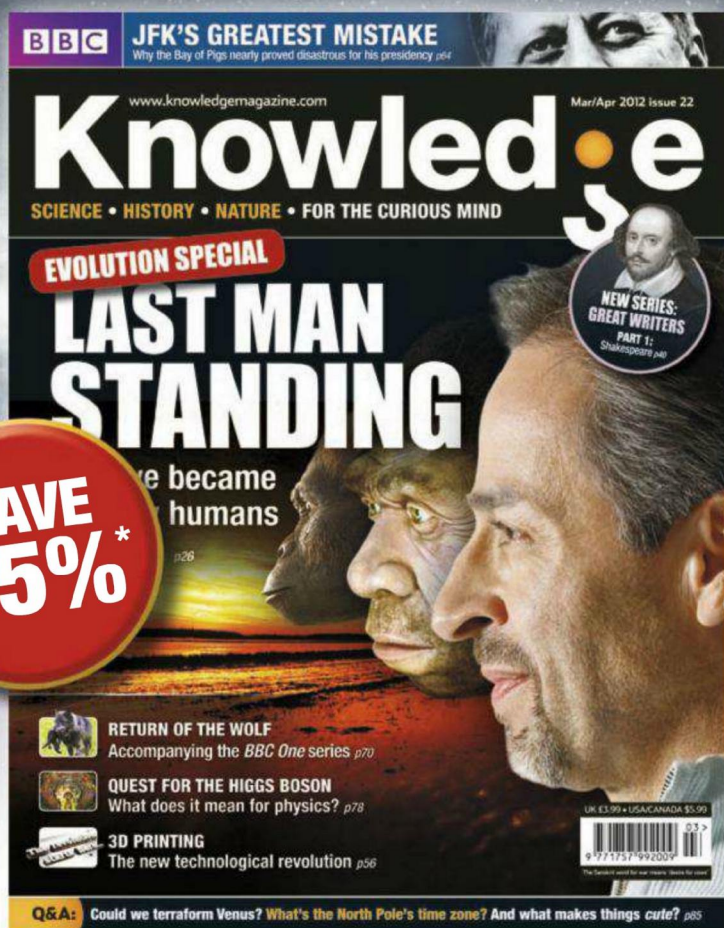


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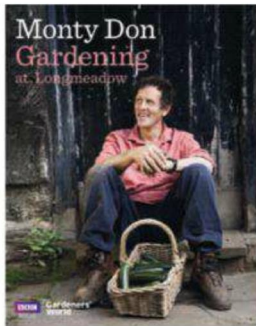
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Book reviews



GARDENING AT LONGMEADOW

by Monty Don

BBC Books, £25

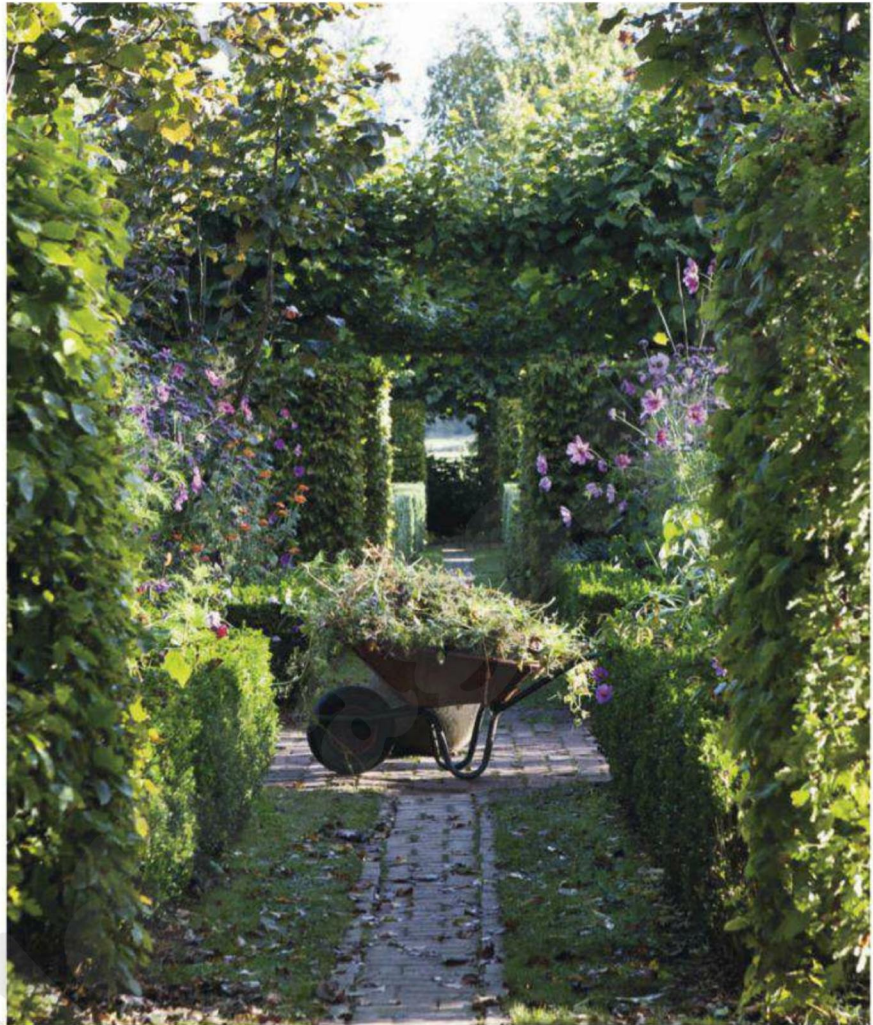
ISBN 978-1849903783

When Monty Don returned to present BBC TV's gardening programme *Gardeners' World* after a period of ill health, it was on condition that he could present the programme from his own garden. 'I cannot separate my passion for gardening from my passion for this garden,' he explains in his new book.

With his wife Sarah, Don began creating his garden from a muddy Herefordshire meadow 20 years ago. The book is a month-by-month potpourri of articles about plants and gardening. A thread of personal reflection runs through the book but at its core is a mass of sound advice on everything you would need to know to make a garden.

Don is clearly a gardener who knows, at first hand, the hard graft involved in making and maintaining a garden, and his counsel is based on experience, not textbooks. Whether he is writing about the beauty of cherry blossom or advising on climbing roses, everything is linked to his own gardening experience.

His pleached limes, for example, do not have the soulless perfection of the Chelsea Flower Show, which few gardeners can mimic. The trees were bought cheaply as a job lot and



MARSHA ARNOLD

Monty Don's new book reflects on 20 years creating his garden, Longmeadow, at Ivington in Herefordshire.

trained and coaxed into something beautiful, with hard work and skill. It is the way that most of us garden and, because of this, you know you can trust Don's advice.

Throughout the book he manages to engage both readers new to gardening and those with more experience, without either patronising the one or boring the other. He explains, for example, what is meant by species roses or how to plant a clematis in a way that is clear for novices and interesting to old hands.

On the down side, the book seems to have been hurriedly written and hastily produced. There is some sloppy editing and the book does not look as beautiful as many

contemporary gardening books do. Fortunately this does not detract from the massive amount of solid information the book gives to people wanting to create a beautiful garden.

Not having a television, I have never seen Don's garden, but I found his advice full of refreshing common sense and his passion for his garden appealing. When *Gardeners' World* returns, I'll be clicking on the iPlayer to admire his garden.

John Hoyland is a garden writer who owns Pioneer Plants in Hertfordshire.

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Book reviews

HERBS: River Cottage handbook no 10

by Nikki Duffy

Bloomsbury, £14.99

ISBN 978-1408808832

I suspect I'm like many gardeners when it comes to culinary herbs – we tend to use the usual suspects of rosemary, thyme and bay year-round and dabble with seasonal herbs, rarely using any of them as much as we might. The latest *River Cottage Handbook* comes at just the right time to encourage us all to up our game and grow and eat many more of these deliciously aromatic plants.

Like the other books in this series, this guide is accessible and full of inspiring ideas (and recipes) for gardeners of every level. A brief but comprehensive introduction on their growing, picking and storage is followed by a herb A-Z. The clever bit about this section is that Nikki Duffy whets the appetite for each herb by writing about how to use it in the kitchen before she deals with its cultivation, so you are already keen to grow it. How could you resist hyssop when she suggests you scatter it whole or chopped over fried halloumi or mozzarella salad? Or how about stuffing a fish with myrtle leaves as a more subtle alternative to bay? I also now know to use garlic 'scapes' and that the green seeds of coriander, fennel and dill are a delicious halfway-house between the leaves and the dried seeds. It is all very mouth-watering.



The growing instructions are clear and informative, especially those about which herbs are worth growing from seed and which are not. For example, there is no point in growing lavender from seed as it seldom comes true. It also makes sense to buy young plants of other woody perennials, including oregano and marjoram, because it takes a long time for them to grow to a croppable size.

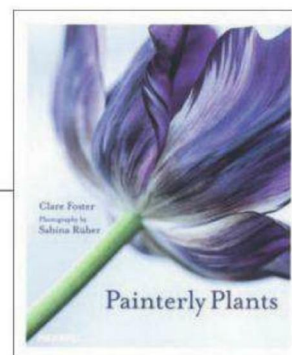
The final third of the book offers a tempting selection of River Cottage recipes. I'm already planning to upgrade the contents of my herb garden so that summer meals can be enriched with delights that include loin of lamb with lavender and lemon thyme, and lemon verbenas layer cake with raspberries. This really is a tasty treat of a book.

Stephanie Donaldson is a journalist and author of several gardening books.

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PAINTERLY PLANTS

by Clare Foster

Merrell, £25

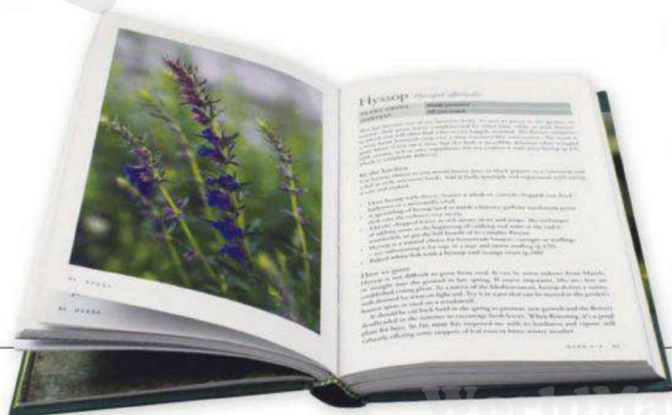
ISBN 978-1858945552

This charming anthology examines 14 flowers that have attracted artists through the ages. Clare Foster, garden editor at *House & Garden* and former editor of *GARDENS ILLUSTRATED*, encourages her readers to 'look – really look' at particular flowers. From auriculas to water lilies, she examines the earliest written and visual records, quotes classical treatises and contemporary enthusiasts, charts breeding histories, advises on modern cultivation and recounts interesting tales as she explores the lore and lure of each plant. She focuses on the role of art in horticulture, pointing out that visual depictions often offer the earliest documentation and provide a valuable record of extinct varieties. From ancient herbals to the lavish florilegia in which proud patrons documented their collections; from the scientifically accurate botanical prints to the personal interpretations of contemporary artists, she traces various approaches to flowers as subject and inspiration. Sabina Rüber's magnificent photos supplement each chapter, but with so much text given over to describing particular paintings, one wonders why copies of these works were not also included. Nonetheless this book will delight lovers of art and flowers. *Katie Campbell is a writer and garden historian.*

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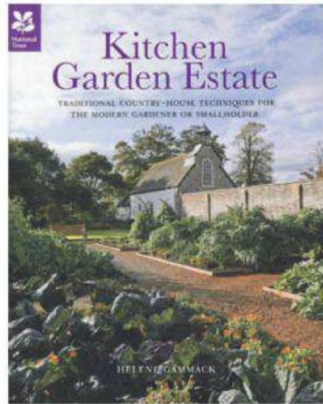
David Nieper

Book reviews

KITCHEN GARDEN ESTATE: Traditional country-house techniques for the modern gardener or smallholder

by Helene Gammack

National Trust, £25, ISBN 978-1907892127



It's unfortunate that the subtitle of this book promises 'techniques for the modern gardener or smallholder'. This is an entertaining read, but it is rather short of techniques, and would probably not be of much use to anyone who is seriously thinking of taking on the arduous task of running a smallholding.

Rather than a practical guide, this book is a potpourri of gardening social history. We learn for example that 'greens' was the term for tender, evergreen plants such as oranges and lemons, hence the term 'greenhouse', and that the word 'greenhouse' was for many years synonymous with 'orangery'. Bee-keeping was traditionally seen as a woman's job: 'One of the duties of the housewife was to extract honey by "sulphuring"'. During this process the bees were all killed. Later in 1768 Thomas Wildman spoke out against the practice in his *Treatise on the Management of Bees*. We learn from

the author that Wildman argued: 'Were we to kill a hen for her egg, the cow for her milk or the sheep for the fleece it bears, everyone would instantly see how much we should act contrary to our own interests; and yet this is practised every year, in our inhuman and impolitic slaughter of the bees.'

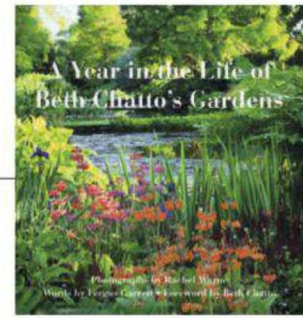
We also learn an amusing tale of the Victorian Lord Leconfield's crushing disappointment after he went to great length (and expense) to get his gardener to grow bananas at his Petworth Estate in East Sussex because he had heard they tasted better from the tree. In front of all the staff he 'peeled it with a golden knife, put it in his mouth and carefully tasted it. Whereupon he flung dish, plate, knife, fork and banana to the floor and shouted "Oh God, it tastes just like any other damn banana!"' Banana tree and all were ordered to be destroyed.

For those interested in cooking there are delightful historical recipes including rose petal and almond cream with crystallised rose petals, which was popular in the 17th and 18th century, as well as quince pie. Final verdict: more coffee table book than practical guide.

Lila Das Gupta is a journalist and allotmenteer.

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A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF BETH CHATTO'S GARDENS

Photographs by Rachel Warne, words by Fergus Garrett

Frances Lincoln, £16.99

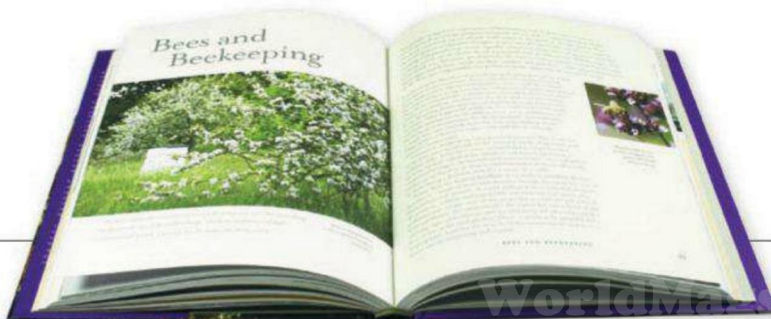
ISBN 978-0711232143

If you can't make the trip to Beth Chatto's famous Essex garden, looking at *A Year in the Life of Beth Chatto's Gardens* is the next best thing. I tend to think that pictures of gardens never tell the truth, but this book proves me wrong. It may be because what matters here is the plants, rather than the whole place, and the photographs really do show you what each plant looks like. The portraits of flowers are ravishing. Garden Photographer of the Year in 2010, Rachel Warne is someone to watch, with a feeling for how things grow and the way light falls.

Add words by Fergus Garrett and you have a book that is useful as well as beautiful. It is true there are no instructions about growing things, but everything is accurately named and exceptionally well observed. Garrett, who so admirably keeps the Great Dixter show on the road, is as good a writer as he is a gardener. 'Whatever the weather brings,' he writes of spring, 'there is joy in the air as even the wooden callused skeletons of the oldest trees come alive with thin veils of unfurling foliage.' Joy in the air and on the page indeed. *Mary Keen is a garden designer and writer who contributes to The Spectator and The Telegraph.*

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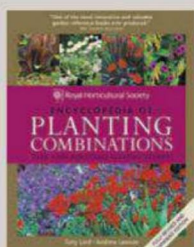


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ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FLOWERING SHRUBS

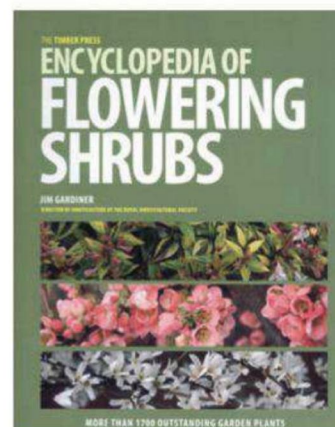
by Jim Gardiner

Timber Press, £35

ISBN 978-0881928235

Flowering shrubs make a garden look better, but knowing which ones to plant can be mind boggling for the average gardener. Luckily Jim Gardiner is far from average: the RHS director of horticulture has been curator of both the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum and RHS Wisley, where he has been adding to the woody plant collections for more than 20 years. He has also written a hugely successful monograph on magnolias.

Jim Gardiner is interested in *all* woody plants, not only magnolias, though, and his experience is evident in this comprehensive guide that covers 1,700 shrubs that flower. Covering so much ground and supplying a picture for each one naturally limits the text, but I don't think this matters. The succinct descriptions are all that is needed. Having a range of 19 choice philadelphus, for instance, in the same book allows any gardener to assess each for size, scent and flower. AGM plants are clearly listed throughout and the 15 to 20 words on each are concise but reflect Jim Gardiner's expert knowledge, garnered over a lifetime in horticulture. It's immediately obvious which plants prefer sun or shade and which soil and position suits them and that's exactly the type of reliable information needed



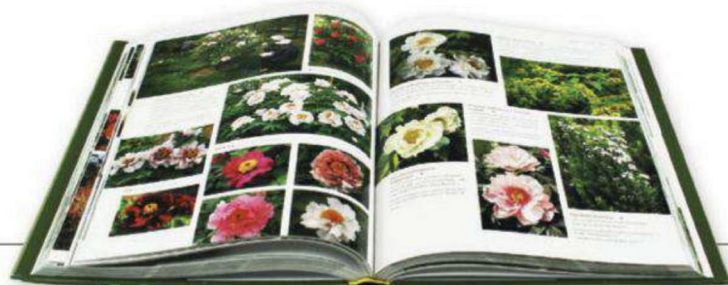
in order to promote the very best plants available in horticulture.

The back of this weighty book also contains a table indicating flower and foliage colour, size, season, hardiness and so on, with an easy key at the top. This allows you to look for a small pink plant that flowers in spring, for instance. Some subshrubs, such as salvias, lavenders, rock roses and euphorbias, are also included. Extra information next to the picture spells out when to prune and why it's worth growing. The alphabetical arrangement makes it easier to identify shrubs you've seen and admired. And if Latin names puzzle you, common names are listed at the back. Lots of rare shrubs are included, to stimulate the serious gardener, so this book is destined to become a reference book for years to come. It's one I shall use a lot. *Val Bourne is a garden writer, photographer and lecturer.* □

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International Garden
Photographer of the Year
Magdalena Wasiczek
Upside Down

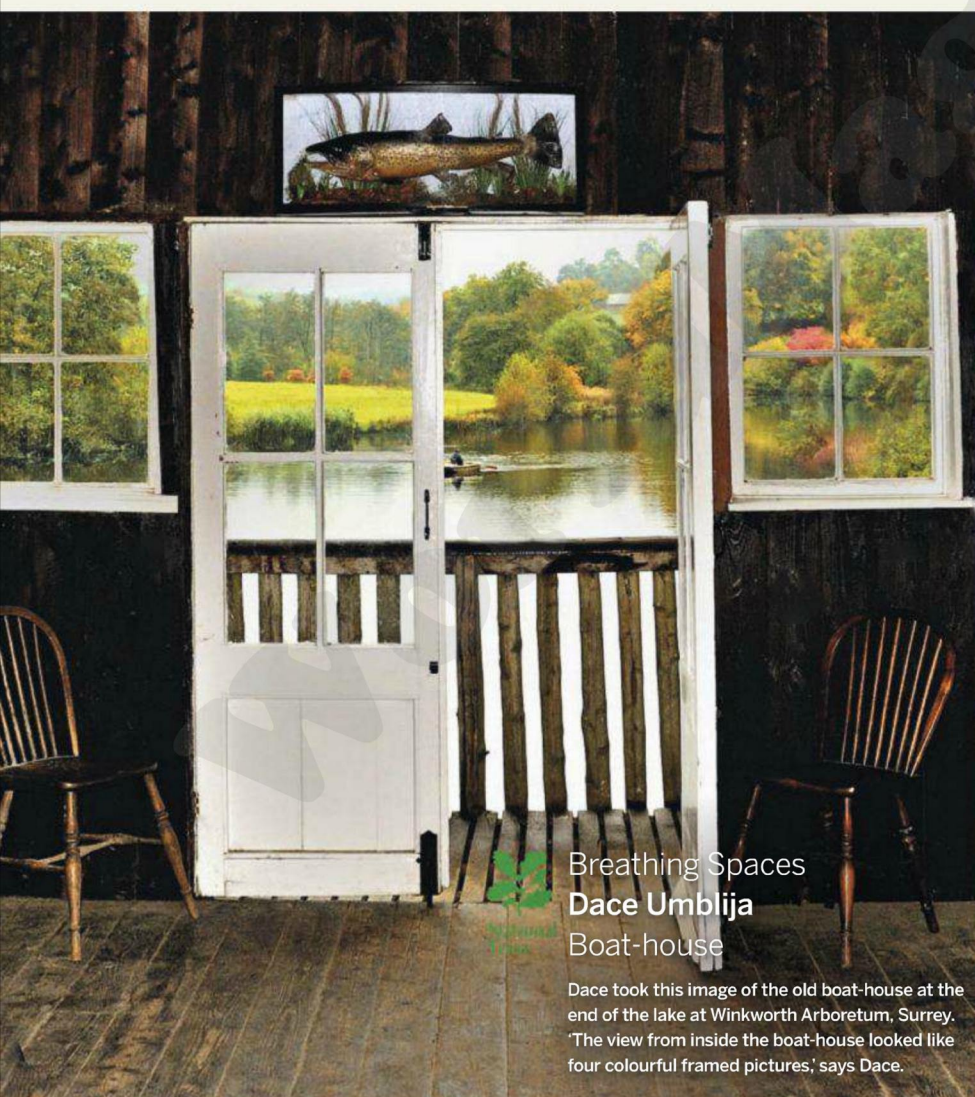
'I grow sweet peas to attract these brimstone butterflies,' says Magdalena, who specialises in detailed shots of plants and insects. She adds: 'This butterfly's wings were beautifully illuminated by the sun and it created a delicate composition with a sprig of sweet pea.' The judges praised the photograph's 'subtlety and balletic simplicity'.



WINNERS 2012

International Garden Photographer of the Year

in association with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, The National Trust and GARDENS ILLUSTRATED



Breathing Spaces
Dace Umblija
Boat-house

Dace took this image of the old boat-house at the end of the lake at Winkworth Arboretum, Surrey. 'The view from inside the boat-house looked like four colourful framed pictures,' says Dace.

The winners of the International Garden Photographer of the Year 2012 have been announced and once again they offer a stunning collection of images that showcase the beauty of gardens, plants and landscapes in all their seasonal glories. The overall winner (opposite) and five of the first-place photographs from other categories are all reproduced on these pages.

More than 90 of the winning and shortlisted photographs are on display in an exhibition held at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, within the magnificent setting of Kew's oldest glasshouse, The Nash Conservatory (until 9 April).

• Prints of IGPOTY competition images are available via <http://prints.kew.org>

Admission is included in the price of entry to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. For details call 020 8332 5655, www.kew.org. After Kew the exhibition moves to the Rheged Centre, Penrith, Cumbria (21 April to 30 June) and Callendar House, Falkirk (3 November 2012 to 19 January 2013).



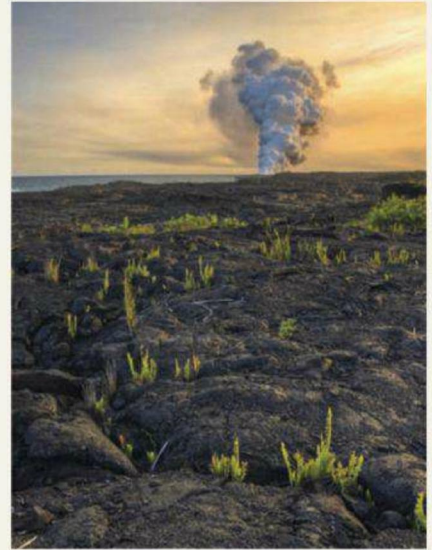
To find out more about all of this year's winners and the shortlisted images go to www.igpoty.com

Fragile Landscapes ▷

Steve Nicholls

Lava Ferns

Steve waited until sunset for this image, when the low angle of the sun made the lines of the native *Polypodium pellucidum* ferns glow as they reclaim a recent lava flow on Hawaii's Big Island.



◀ Young Garden

Photographer of the Year

Patrick Corning

Hummingbird

Patrick, age 15, took this shot of a grey-tailed mountain-gem hummingbird feeding from garden flowers while travelling with his family in the mountains of Costa Rica.



Greening the City

Claire Takacs

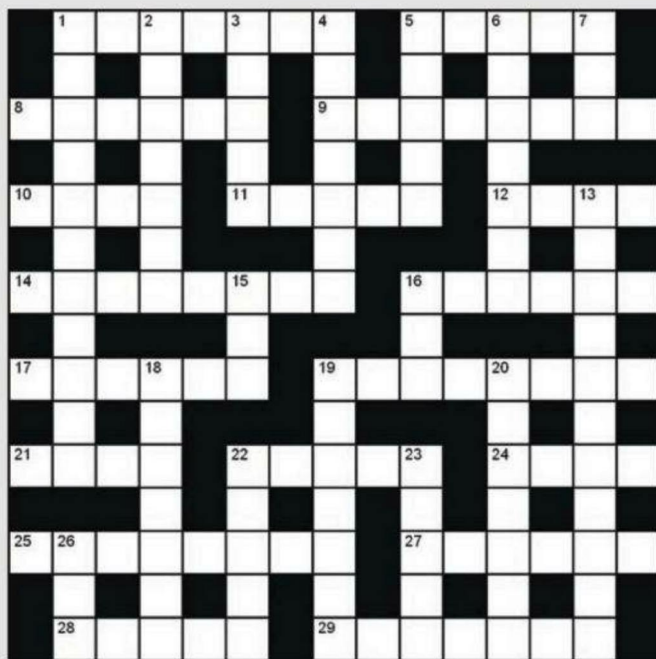
Conversations from a balcony
at dusk along the High Line

The High Line is a park on an elevated former railway line in New York. 'It was my first visit and I absolutely loved it, especially at dusk,' Claire says. 'The human interaction was something I wanted to capture.'

The Beauty of Plants
Magdalena Wasiczek
Summer in Rain

Another win for Magdalena with an image taken while on holiday in the Malopolska region of her native Poland. 'Because of the abundance and diversity of fauna and flora, it is a true photographic paradise for me. Heleniums are one of my favourite plants of late summer.'

Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Plant with usually red/purple pendulous flowers, named after German botanist (7)
- 5 Free-draining, alkaline type of soil (5)
- 8 Genus of bulbous perennials... from Mull I twice cultivated (6)
- 9 Small orange (or large, if a favourite geum of Sue Martin) (8)
- 10 Gents' items of wear which secure tall plant? (4)
- 11 Fir tree products used to divert motorway traffic? (5)
- 12 An instant to shed top of jasmine – which is dubious (4)
- 14 Prevents celery turning green, swapping right for left in boughs! (8)
- 16 Sound of eg 'Honesty' blowing in the wind (6)
- 17 Like the texture of coarse sandy soil? Good, try it out! (6)
- 19 Flexible means of watering plants? (8)
- 21 One of Sue Martin's favourite geums when it's just light (4)
- 22 Light purple shade of eg the saffron crocus (5)
- 24 Inner Hebridean island – in pollination activity (4)
- 25 A *Cornus* group – native of North America (8)
- 27 Genus of which the flowering cherry 'Ukon' is a favourite at Olivers Plants (6)
- 28 Date trees – plantsman's first charitable relief! (5)
- 29 Perennial, also called angels' fishing rods – excited Madeira (7)

DOWN

- 1 Genus in the *Liliaceae* family – *F. persica* 'Adiyaman' is a favourite at Olivers (11)
- 2 Colour of the summer Adonis flower – almost an offence, my boy! (7)
- 3 *Rhus* tree hidden by *Alyssum*, accidentally (5)
- 4 Drupes from *Prunus dulcis* old man's sorted (7)
- 5 Beats raspberry stems (5)
- 6 Wattles – Caucasians spoil, without sun (7)
- 7 Ornamental pond fish... in thick oil! (3)
- 13 Commonly called meadowsweet – a field lupin, perhaps? (11)
- 15 Cut grass, from tops of hosta and yucca (3)
- 16 Rich heavy soil initially for the Chelsea flower show organiser (3)
- 18 A plant's coiling, threadlike climbing organ (7)
- 19 An old axe and another name for our *Nurseryman's favourite* 'Wehrhahnii' willow (7)
- 20 Genus of 'Auricula' species – bit straight-laced at the start! (7)
- 22 Water features producing kale by start of spring (5)
- 23 Thicket of trees (5)
- 26 Fashionable sort of flower fruit? (3)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH MARCH'S SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 Serrated 6 Biggs 9 Spadix 10 Sprouted 11 Coir 12 Seedy 13 Mate 14 *Abelia* 16 Treetops 19 Daffodil 22 Floury 24 Spur 26 Senna 28 Gene 29 *Camellia* 30 Tannin 31 Latex 32 Auricula.

DOWN: 2 *Euphorbia* 3 Ruderal 4 *Taxus* 5 Dessert 6 Berry 7 Gourmet 8 Sweet 15 And 17 Elf 18 Perennial 20 Forrest 21 *Lantana* 23 Organic 25 Pearl 26 *Salix* 27 Aster [apologies for the omission of the clue for this answer, which should have read: Sound of Lady Nancy's daisy-like flower (5)].

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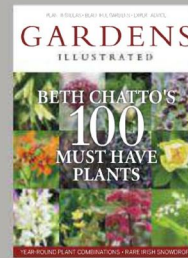
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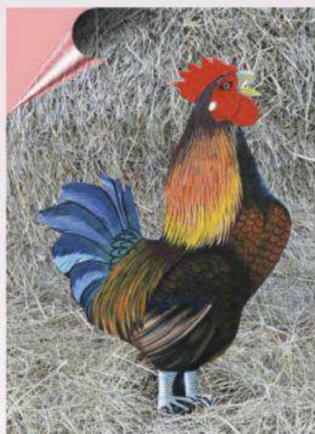
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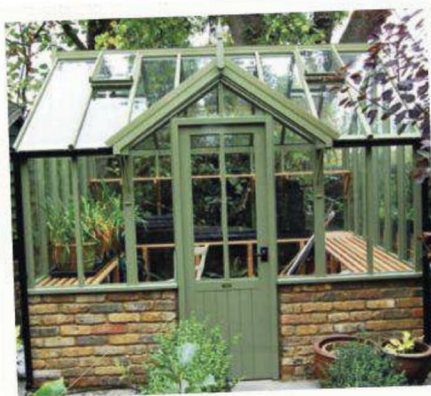
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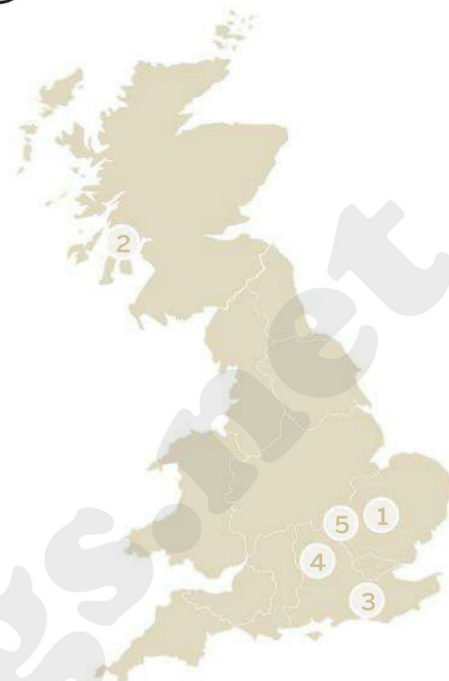
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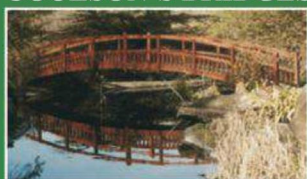


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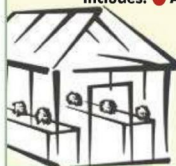
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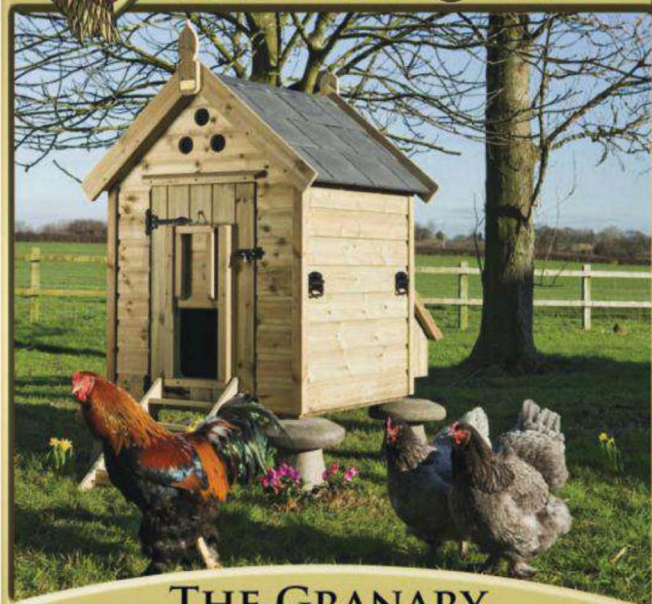
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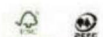
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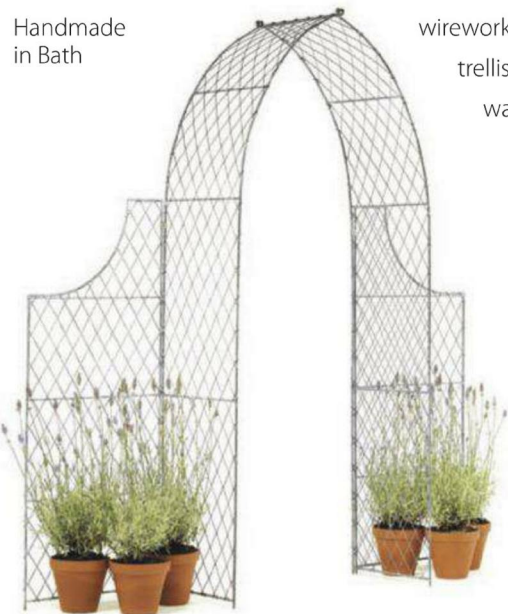


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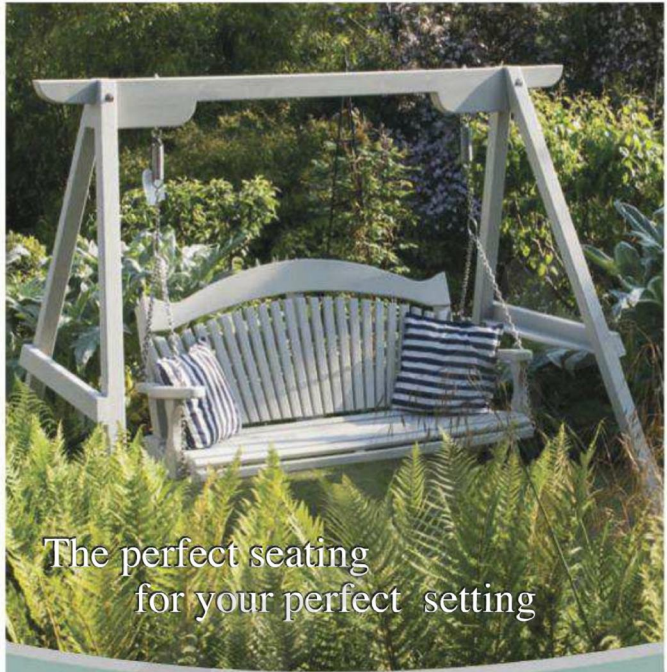
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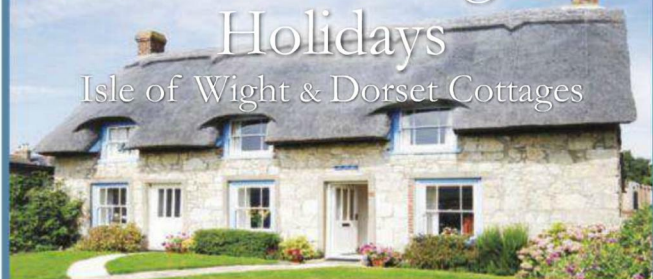
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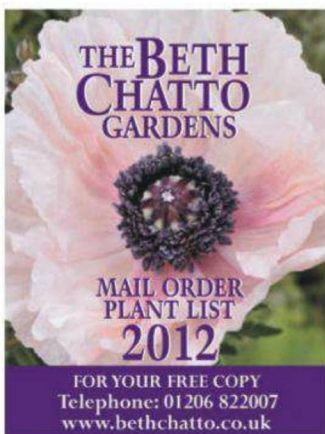
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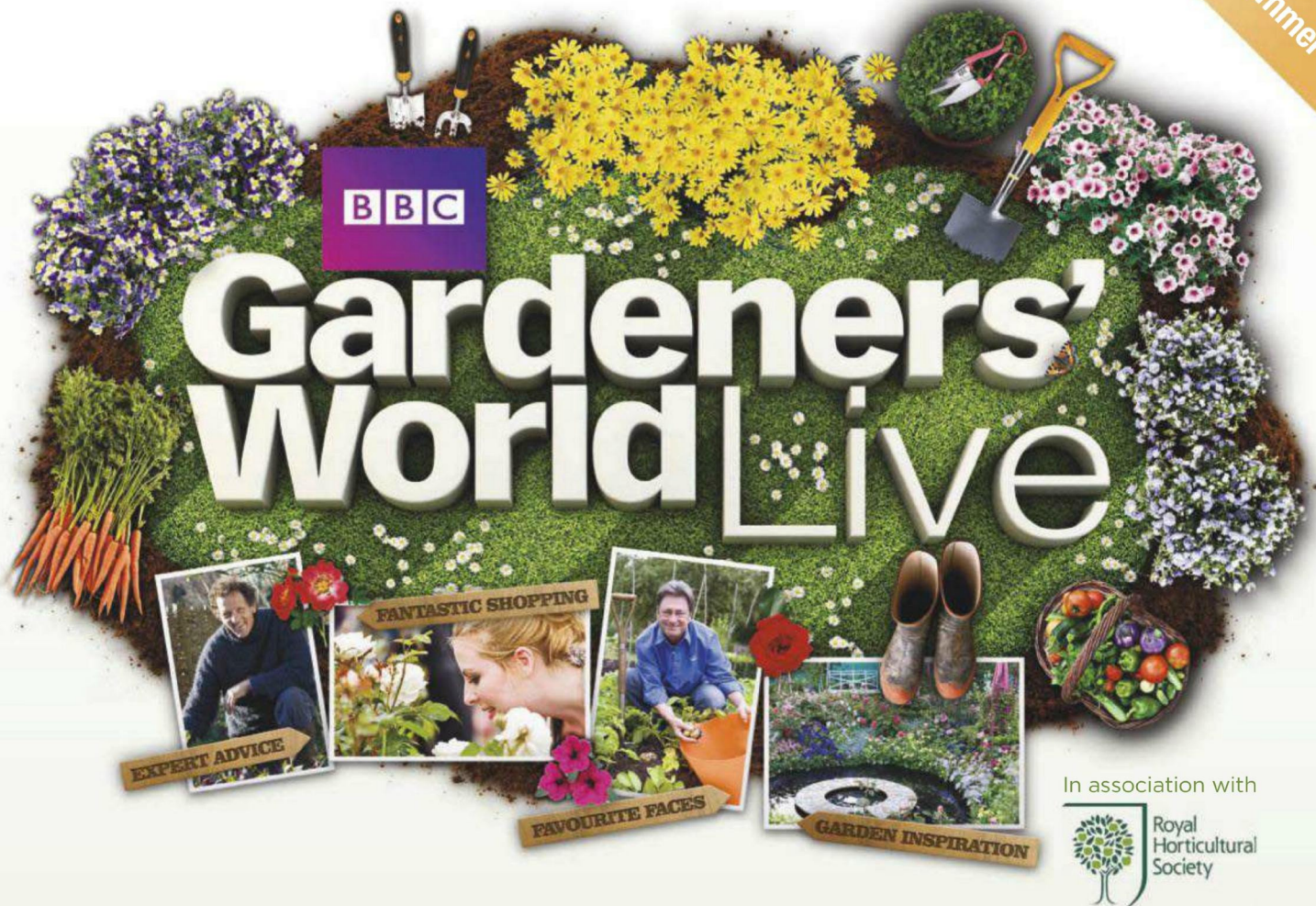
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Herbal remedy

The mint never seems to come soon enough for the lamb. There's a big pot of it undergoing theoretical enforcement in a frame, but I'll probably have forgotten to water that and so it won't be far ahead of the main crop beneath the *Eucryphia*, where I'll have been scanning the ground for first signs of tight dark hairy buds to be recklessly harvested. If made correctly, with the maximum of mint and the minimum of vinegar, the smallest quantity of fresh mint sauce is as delicious as the bought stuff is repulsive. What I know as apple mint (*Mentha suaveolens*) is best for this: the kind with rounded furry leaves. It is also more beautiful than ordinary mint, or would be if one didn't keep decapitating it for sauce.

Mint is the most obliging of herbs. If you are not careful it will oblige its way through an entire border. The best place for it is between a tree and a grass path. A tree is one of the few things that can out-compete it while the dullness of mowing your paths will be momentarily offset by wafts of mintiness as you run over the part into which the mint has intruded. I made the mistake of putting some near a cobbled path once, and three years after its removal am still lifting cobbles to get at stray rhizomes.

Some people like to have their culinary herbs by the kitchen door for convenience. It is better to have them spread through the garden so that the gathering requires an expedition. That makes a nice break when you are cooking, but the practical reason is that the herbs themselves will require different conditions, not all of which are likely to be provided within arm's reach of your threshold. Parsley and sorrel should be in the vegetable garden, if only not to be mistaken for buttercups and docks during



Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

Why home-grown herbs should be given the freedom of your garden

WORDS FRANK RONAN ILLUSTRATION ANGELA HARDING

frenzied bouts of weeding. Chervil is even more undistinguished and if you send someone else to pick it they will inevitably come back with cow parsley, no matter how knowledgeable they claimed to be during their persistent offer to help.

I used to drive myself mad growing dill and coriander which, sow as much and as often as you like, are never there when you need them. Now that even the most backward

grocer sells enormous bunches of both at all times of the year I am thrilled not to bother. The same should apply to basil, which is always a dismal failure for me, but somehow I think that one day I'll find a variety which doesn't resent life on a chilly hilltop. The real reason is that I prefer the flavour of the domestic kinds to that of the overblown greasy leaves that come in pots and cellophane from the supermarket.

Luckily, tarragon is easier to accommodate. I keep it in clay pots in well-drained soil and that seems to be enough to bring it through the winter. Infinitely useful in cooking, tarragon is also taste bud-bending when grazed straight from the stalk. A Persian friend taught me that: they have bunches of herbs by the plate which they nibble at between other mouthfuls and call it salad. It makes our idea of salad a little grey. Once you make that discovery you can never have enough tarragon. It is not beautiful, but the pots can be distributed among other things to mitigate the disadvantage.

Winter savoury enjoys the same conditions and will sow itself from one pot to another. Of the woody herbs it is easily the best and subtlest, along the lines of thyme but much finer in flavour. I wouldn't mind finding the equivalent of sage or rosemary. Those are strong flavours that were of great value in an age when the purpose of herbs was more to disguise than to enhance. Increasingly you will hear people saying that they don't like them. I still love them, but know myself to be a flogger of dead horses. □



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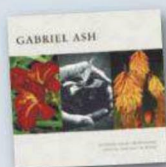
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